Peak of Eloquence

Nahjul-Balagha

By

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib

With Commentary

By

Martyr Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari

Edited by

Yasin T. Al-Jibouri

In the name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc.

Publishers & Distributors of Holy Qur'an

80-08 51st Avenue

Elmhurst, New York 11373-4141

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Seventh U.S. Edition 2009

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2005900698
British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

ISBN: Paperback 978-1-879402-34-8
ISBN: Casebound 978-1-879402-35-5

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Contents

Part One

Introduction 2
Nahjul-Balagha ***and Present-Day's Islamic Society*** 5
A Literary Marvel 7
Sayyid Al-Radi and *Nahjul-Balagha* 8
Two Distinctive Characteristics 10
Literary Beauty and Elegance 11
Effect of Ali's Oratory 12
Views of Ancient and Modern Scholars 13
    Modern Perspectives 16
Nahjul-Balagha among Literary Classics 19
Ali's Versatility 21
    Themes of *Nahjul-Balagha* 24
    A Glance at the Varied Problems Covered by *Nahjul-Balagha* 24

Part Two

Theology and Metaphysics of *Nahjul-Balagha* 26
A Bitter Reality 28
    Shi`i Rationalism 29
    Philosophical Notions Concerning Metaphysics 32
    The Value of Studying the Natural Phenomena 37
    Purely Rationalistic Problems 38
    The Divine Essence and Attributes 41
The Divine Essence 41
Divine Unity : Ontological, Not a Numerical Concept 42
    Allah, the First and the Last; the Manifest and the Hidden 44
An Appraisal 46
    Nahjul-Balagha and the Notions of *Kalam* 47
    An Ash`arite Believes in the Separation [Of the Attributes from the Essence] 47
    Nahjul-Balagha and Philosophical Concepts 48
    Nahjul-Balagha and Western Philosophic Thought 51

Part Three

Suluk and *Ibada* 53
The Levels of Worship 53
The Approach of *Nahjul-Balagha* 55
The Worship of Freemen 56

Remembering Allah 56
The Levels of Devotion 57
Nights of the Devout 57
The Profile of the Pious 58
Night Vigils 59
The Spiritual Experience 59
The Purging of Sins 61
Moral Remedy 61
Intimacy and Ecstasy 61

Part Four

Government and Justice 63
Nahjul-Balagha on State 63
The Importance of Politics 64
Justice: "Supreme Value" 67
Indifference to Injustice 70
Justice Should not be Compromised 71
People's Rights 72
The Church and the Right of Sovereignty 72
Nahjul-Balagha: the Approach 75
Rulers are People's Trustees, Not Masters 76

Part Five

Moral Lectures and Aphorisms 81
Inimitable Moral Teaching 81
Comparison 81
Spiritual Counsel and Wisdom 83
Maw`iza and *Khitaba* (Exhortation and Oratory) 84
Nahjul-Balagha's Recurring Themes 86
The Themes in Spiritual Pieces of Advice 86
Ali's Logic 87
Taqwa 87
Taqwa is Immunity not Restraint 90
Taqwa as Immunity 91
Reciprocal Commitment 92
Zuhd (Asceticism) and Piety 93
Islamic *Zuhd* and Christian Asceticism 95
Two Questions 95
The Three Essential Principles 97
The Zahid and the Monk 98
Zuhd and Altruism 100

Sympathy and Kindness 101
Zuhd and Freedom 103
Zuhd and Spirituality; Zuhd, Love and Worship 108
Contradiction between the this World and the Hereafter 111
Zuhd: Minimum of Intake for Maximum Output 112

Part Six

Dunya: The World and Worldliness 117
Renunciation of *Dunya* in *Nahjul-Balagha* 117
The Danger Created by War Booty 117
Intoxication of Affluence 119
General Aspect of Ali's Warnings 119
Every School Has Its Own Terminology 120
Condemned World 121
Relationship between Man and World 122
Logic of Islam 122
The World in the Holy Quran and *Nahjul-Balagha* 127
Freedom and Bondage 132
Existentialist Viewpoint 136
Does Evolution Involve Self-Alienation? 136
Forgetting and Losing the "Self" 137
Discovery of the Self and of Allah 140
Worship and Rediscovery of the Self 143
Some Relevant Issues 144
Life in this World *versus* in the Hereafter 144
The Primary and the Secondary 145
A Relevant Tradition 146
What is *Shi'ism* (تشيع)? 150
1 - Shi`ism in the Contemporary World 150
2 - Centers of Shi`ite Learning 151
3 - Origin of Shi`ism 152
4 - Shi`ites and other Muslims 153
5 - Shi`ite Beliefs 156
I Unity of God (*Tawhid*) 156
II Prophethood: The Sending of the Prophet (ص) (*Nubuwwa*) 157
III Belief in the Day of Resurrection 157
6 - Distinctions of Shi`ism 158
7- Sources of Shi`ite Religious Instructions 158
8 - Social and Moral Duties 160

Part Seven

Nahjul-Balagha : The Book, This Book 162
in the 1st Century 162
in the 2nd Century 163
in the 3rd Century 163
in the 4th Century 163
in the 5th Century 164
Author : Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) 169
1. Genealogy 169
2. Birth 169
3. Name 169
4. *Kunya* 170
5. Titles 170
6. Physique 170
7. Upbringing 170
8. The Holy Prophet (ص) and Hazrat Ali (ع): How They Loved Each Other 171
9. Character 173
10. Faith 177
11. Wife, Children and Domestic Life 178
12. Ali Among his Friends and Foes, the Rich and the Poor ... 179
I. Ali's Treatment of His Foes 179
II.Let us see what the history says about his behavior with his friends and relatives 181
III. Ali (ع) among His Servants and Slaves 182
IV. Ali (ع) among His Subjects 183
V. Ali (ع) Among the Poor 185
13. Ali's Diet 186
14. His Clothing 187
15. Ali's Services to Islam and the Holy Prophet (ص) 189
16. Appointment of Ali (ع) as the Prophet's Vicegerent 202
Prophet's Historic Ghadir Sermon 208
In The Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful Sermon 211
A Brief Narrative of Imam Ali's life from the Hijra to Death of the Holy Prophet (ص) 228
1 To 40 A.H. 228
1 A.H. 229
2 A.H. 229
3 A.H. 230

4 A.H. 231
5 A.H. 231
6 A.H. 231
7 A.H. 232
8 A.H. 232
9 A.H. 234
10 A.H. 237
11 A.H. 237
The Last Moment and Burial Rites of the Holy Prophet (ص).. 239
Burial of the Holy Prophet (ص) 240
Death of Fatima (ع)..... 242
From 12 A.H. To 24 A.H. 244
From 11 A.H. To 33 A.H. 247
Muharrum 1, 24 A.H. 248
34 to 40 A.H. 251
40 A.H. 258
Imam Ali (ع): Ruler and Statesman 260
His Reforms 262
Introduction of New System of Government 263
How He Organized Public Service Departments 263
The Army 267
Judicial Procedure 269
Central and Provincial Secretariat and Subordinate Offices 271
Ali (ع) and the Philosophy of Religions 273
Compiler and Commentators of *Nahjul-Balagha* 280
Sunni Commentators: 283
Shi`a Commentators: 284
Preface by the Compiler of *Nahjul-Balagha*, *Allama* ash-Sharif ar-Radi286
In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate 286
Notes 289
The Editor 294

Part Eight

Nahjul Balagha

Selected Sermons, Letters and Sayings of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) 299
Sermon 1 299
Creation of the Universe 300
Creation of the Angels 300

Creation of Adam.....301
Allah Chooses His Prophets (ع).....302
The Prophethood of Muhammad (ص).....303
The Holy Quran and the Sunnah.....303
In this Same Sermon, He Spoke thus about the Hajj 304
The Imam says the following: 307
Sermon 2 Delivered on return from Siffin before his Nomination by the Prophet (ص) for the Caliphate 312
Sermon 3Known as the sermon as ash-Shaqshaqiyya 314
Need for the Prophet's Caliph and the Method of His Appointment 323
Sermon 4 Amir Al-Mu'minin's Far-Sightedness and Staunch Conviction.....331
Sermon 5 Delivered when the Holy Prophet (ص) died and Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib and Abu Sufyan ibn Harb offered to swear allegiance to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) as the Caliph 333
Sermon 6 Delivered on being advised not to chase Talhah ibn Ubaydillah and az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam for fighting.....336
Sermon 7 About the Hypocrites.....336
Sermon 8 About Az-Zubayr at a Time For Which it Was Appropriate 337
Sermon 9 Cowardice of the people of Jamal 338
Sermon 10 About Talhah and az-Zubayr.....338
Sermon 11 Delivered during the Battle of Jamal when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) gave the standard to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya.....339
Sermon 12 342
Sermon 13 Condemning the People of Basra 343
Sermon 14 Also Condemning the People of Basra.....351
Sermon 15 After Resuming the Land Grants Made My Othman Ibn Affan [To the State Treasury], He Said: 351
Sermon 16 Delivered When Allegiance Was Sworn to Him at Medina351
Sermon 17 About Those Who Sit for Dispensation of Justice among People but Are Not Fit for It.....354
Sermon 18 Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said in Disparagement of the Differences of Views among the Theologians.....355
Sermon 19 Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) delivering a lecture from the pulpit of (the mosque of) Kufa when al-Ash`ath ibn Qays objected and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (ع)! This thing is not in your favor but against you.[2] Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) looked at him with anger and said: 359

Sermon 20 Death and Learning Lessons From it 364
Sermon 21Advice to Keep Light in this World 365
Sermon 22 About Those Who Accused Him of Othman's Killing 365
Sermon 23 About Keeping Aloof from Envy and Good Behavior Towards Kith and Kin..... 367
Sermon 25 When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) received successive news that Mu`awiyah's men were occupying cities and his own officers in Yemen namely `Ubaydullah ibn Abbas and Sa'id ibn Imran came to him retreating after being overpowered by Bisr ibn Abu Arta'ah, he was much disturbed by the slackness of his own men in *jihad* and their difference with his opinion. Proceeding on the pulpit, he said 368
Sermon 26 Arabia Before the Proclamation of Prophethood..... 369
Sermon 27 Exhorting People for *Jihad*..... 371
Sermon 28 About the Transient Nature of this World and the Importance of the next World 373
Sermon 29 About Those Who Found Pretexts at the Time of *Jihad* 374
Sermon 30 Disclosing Real Facts about the Assassination of Othman Ibn Affan, Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said: 375
Sermon 31 Delivered Before the Commencement of the Battle of Jamal 383
Sermon 32 About the Disparagement of the World and Categories of its People..... 384
Sermon 33 Abdullah ibn Abbas says that when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) set out to fight the people of Basra, he came to his audience at Thi-Qar and saw that Abdullah [ibn Abbas] was stitching his shoe. Then Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said to me, "What is the price of this shoe?" I said: "It has no value now." He then said, "By Allah! It should have been more dear to me than ruling over you except for the fact that I have established right and warded off wrong." Then the Imam (ع) came out and spoke thus: 385
Sermon 34 To Prepare the People for Fighting with the People of Syria (Ash-Sham) Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said: 387
Sermon 35 Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Delivered this Sermon after the Arbitration..... 388
Sermon 36 Warning the People of Nahrawan of Their Fate..... 393
Sermon 37 Amir Al-Mu'minin's Utterance Which Runs like a Sermon about His Own Steadfastness in Religion and Precedence in (Acceptance of) Conviction. 395

Sermon 38 About the Naming of Doubt as Such and Disparagement of Those in Doubt: 395
Sermon 39 In Disparagement of Those Who Shrink from Fighting 396
Sermon 40 When Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Heard the Cry of Kharijites That Verdict Is Only That of Allah, He Said: 397
Sermon 41 Condemning Treason 397
Sermon 42 About Heart's Desires and Extended Hopes 398
Sermon 43 After Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Had Sent Jarir Ibn Abdillah al-Bajali to Mu`awiyah (For Securing His Oath of Allegiance), Some of His Companions Suggested Preparation to Fight with him. 398
Sermon 44 Masqalah Ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani Fled to Mu`awiyah Because He Had Purchased Some Prisoners of Banu Najiyah from an Executive of Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع), but When He Demanded the Price, the Latter Avoided and Ran to Syria. Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said: 399
Sermon 45 About Allah's Greatness and the Lowliness of this World 401
Sermon 46 When Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Decided to March Towards Syria, He Made These Statements: 401
Sermon 47 About Calamities Befalling Kufa: 402
Sermon 48 Delivered at the Time of Marching Towards Syria. 402
Sermon 49 About Allah's Greatness and Sublimity 403
Sermon 50 About Mixing Right With Wrong 403
Sermon 51 During the Battle of Siffin, the men who were fighting on the side of Mu`awiyah overpowered the men of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), occupying the bank of the River Euphrates and preventing them from having access to its water. It is then that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said the following: 404
Sermon 52 This Sermon Has Already Been Cited But, Due to the Difference Between the Two Versions, We Have Quoted it Again Here. Its Subject Is the Downfall of the World and Reward and Punishment in the Hereafter 405
Sermon 53 On the Oath of Allegiance 406
Sermon 54 When Amir Al-Mu'minin's Showed Impatience on His Delay in Giving Them Permission to Fight in Siffin, He Said 406
Sermon 55 About Steadfastness on the Battlefield 406
Sermon 56 Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Said the Following to his Companions about Mu`awiyah: 407
Sermon 57 Addressing the Kharijites, Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said the Following 409

Sermon 58 When Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Announced His Intention to Fight the Kharijites, He Was Told That They Had Crossed the Bridge of Nahrawan and Gone over to the Other Side. It Was Then That Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said the Following: 410
Sermon 59 When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Was Told That the Kharijites Had Been Totally Killed, He Said the Following. 410
Sermon 60 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Also Said the Following 412
Sermon 61 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Warned of Being Killed by Deceit, He Said the Following: 413
Sermon 62 About the Transience of the World 413
Sermon 63 About Decline and Destruction of the World 414
Sermon 64 About Allah's Attributes 415
Sermon 65 In Some of the Fighting Days of the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following to His Followers about the Methods of Fighting: 415
Sermon 66 When after the Death of the Prophet (ص) News Reached Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about the Happening in *Saqifa* of Banu Sa'i-dah, He Inquired What the Ansar Said. People Said That They Were Asking for One Chief from among Them and One from the Others, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following: 416
Sermon 67 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Appointed Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr as the Ruler of Egypt, and the Latter Was Overpowered and Killed, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following: 419
Sermon 68 Admonishing His Companions Not to Be Careless in Their Behavior, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following: ... 420
Sermon 69 Delivered in the Morning of the Day When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Fatally Struck with a Sword's Blow: 421
Sermon 70 Condemning the Then People of Iraq 421
Sermon 71 Here, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Tells People How to Pronounce the Asalawat (To Invoke Divine Blessings on the Prophet [ص]) 422
Sermon 72 When Marwan ibn al-Hakam was taken captive during the Battle of the Camel (Jamal) in Basra, he asked Hassan and Hussain (peace be upon them) to intercede on his behalf before Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). So they spoke to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) about him and he released him. Then they said,

"O Imam Ali! Marwan desires to swear his allegiance to you, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: .. 423
Sermon 73 When the Consultative Committee (Or *Shura*) Decided to Swear the Oath of Allegiance to `Othman, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following: 424
Sermon 74 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Learned That the Umayyads Blamed Him for Killing `Othman, He Said the Following: 424
Sermon 75 About Preaching and Counseling 425
Sermon 76 About the Umayyads 425
Sermon 77 Supplications by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): 425
Sermon 78 When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) decided to set out for the battle with the Kharijites someone said, "If you set out at this moment then according to astrology I fear you will not be successful in your aim," whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: 426
Sermon 79 After the Battle of Jamal, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following about Physical Defects of Women: 427
Sermon 80 About the Methods of Preaching and Counseling 429
Sermon 81 About the World and its People..... 429
Sermon 82 This Sermon Is Called Al-gharra', and it is One of the Most Wonderful Sermons of Imam Ali Ibn Abu TAlib (ع): 431
Sermon 83 About Amr ibn al-As 437
Sermon 84 About the Perfection of Allah and Counseling..... 438
Sermon 85 About Getting Ready for the next World and Following Allah's Commandments: 439
Sermon 86 Qualities of a Faithful Believer: 440
Sermon 87 About the Division of the Community into Factions: 444
Sermon 88 About the Holy Prophet (ص): 445
Sermon 89 Allah's Attributes; Some Other Pieces of Advice: 446
Sermon 90 447
Sermon 91When People Decided to Swear Allegiance to Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Hand after the Murder of Othman, He Said the Following: 460
Sermon 92 About the Annihilation of the Kharijites, The Mischief Mongering of Umayyads and the Vastness of His Knowledge 462
Sermon 93 Praising Allah and Lauding His Prophets:..... 464
Sermon 94 About the Condition of the People at the Time of the Prophet's Proclamation and about His Actions Having to Do with the Dissemination of His Message: 465

Sermon 95 In Praise of Allah and of the Holy Prophet (ص)..... 466
Sermon 96 Ali (ع) Admonishing His Companions..... 467
Sermon 97 Oppressiveness of the Umayyads: 470
Sermon 98 About Abstinence from the World and Vicissitudes of Time: 471
Sermon 99 About the Holy Prophet (ص) and his Descendants (ع)..... 472
Sermon 100 About the Vicissitudes of Time 472
Sermon 101 On the Same Subject: The Day of Judgement 473
Sermon 102 About Gluttony, Fear of Allah..... 474
Sermon 103 About the Condition of the People Before the Proclamation of Prophethood and the Prophet's Performance in Spreading His Message..... 475
Sermon 104 In Praise of the Holy Prophet (ص)..... 476
Sermon 105 About Islam 477
Sermon 106 Delivered During One of the Fighting Days of the Battle of Siffin:..... 478
Sermon 107 One of the Sermons about the Vicissitudes of Time 479
Sermon 108 About the Might of Allah 481
Sermon 109 About Islam 484
Sermon 110 Cautioning about this World..... 485
Sermon 111 About the Angel of Death and the Soul Taking Leave..... 487
Sermon 112 About the World and its People..... 487
Sermon 113 About Abstemiousness, Fear of Allah and Importance of Providing for the next Life..... 488
Sermon 114 Praying for Rain 491
Sermon 115 About Troubles Which Will Arise and the Day of Judgement 492
Sermon 116 Rebuking Misers..... 493
Sermon 117 In Praise Of His Faithful Companions..... 493
Sermon 118 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) collected the people and exhorted them to *jihad* but they observed a long silence. Then he said the following: "What is the matter with you. Have you lost your wits?! A group of them replied: "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! If you go forth we shall be with you, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: .. 494
Sermon 119 About The Greatness Of Ahl Al-Bayt (ع) And The Importance Of The Laws Of Islam 495
Sermon 120 A man from among the companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib stood up and said, "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! You first stopped us from the arbitration, then you gave order for it. We do not know which of the two was more appropriate?"

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) struck one hand over the other and said the following.....496
Sermon 121 When the Kharijites Persisted in Their Rejecting the Arbitration, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Went to Their Camp and Addressed Them Thus.....497
Sermon 122 Address of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) to His Followers on the Battlefield of Siffin About Providing a Moral Support For the Weak and the Low-spirited During the Fighting.....498
Sermon 123 Exhorting His Followers to Fight.....499
Sermon 124 About the Kharijites and Their Opinion on Arbitration: ..508
Sermon 125 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Spoken Ill of for Showing Equality in the Distribution (Of Shares from *Bayt al-Mal* or the Muslim Public Treasury) He Said the Following...509
Sermon 126 About the Kharijites.....509
Sermon 127 About Important Events in Basra.....510
Sermon 128 About Measures and Weights, the Transience of this World and the Condition of its People.....515
Sermon 129 Delivered When Abu Dharr (رض) Was Exiled to Rabadha:516
Sermon 130 Grounds for Accepting the Caliphate and the Qualities of a Ruler and Governor.....519
Sermon 131 Warning About Death.....520
Sermon 132 On the Glory of Allah.....521
Sermon 133 Delivered when `Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about himself, taking part in the march towards Rome (Byzantine Empire).....522
Sermon 134 There was some exchange of words between `Othman ibn Affan and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) when al-Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas said to Othman that he will deal with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on his behalf whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to al-Mughirah:.....524
Sermon 135 About the Sincerity of His Own Intention and Support of the Oppressed.....524
Sermon 136 About Talhah and az-Zubayr.....525
Sermon 137 Referring to Future Events.....526
Sermon 138 On the Occasion of the Consultative Committee (After the Death of `Umar Ibn al-Khattab).....527
Sermon 139 About Backbiting and Speaking Ill of Others.....527
Sermon 140 Reliance on Hearsay Revisited.....530
Sermon 141 Against Misplaced Generosity.....531
Sermon 142 Praying for Rain.....531

Sermon 143 Deputation of the Prophet (ص) 532
Sermon 144 About this World 533
Sermon 145 Delivered When `Umar Ibn al-Khattab Consulted Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about Taking Part in the Battle of Then Persia..... 534
Sermon 146 The Purpose of the Deputation of the Holy Prophet (ص) and the Condition of the Time When People Will Go Against the Holy Quraan 536
Sermon 147 About Talhah and az-Zubayr and the People of Basra 538
Sermon 148 Before His Passing Away (Last Will) 538
Sermon 149 About Future Events and Some Activities of the Hypocrites 539
Sermon 150 The Condition of the People During Disorder and Advice Against Oppression and Unlawful Earning 541
Sermon 151 About the greatness and the attributes of Allah 542
Sermon 152 About Negligent Persons and the Characteristics of Beasts, Carnivores and Women 545
Sermon 153 About Ahl al-Bayt (ع) and their Opponents 547
Sermon 154 About the Wonderful Creation of the Bat..... 548
Sermon 155 About the Malice Borne by `A'isha, and Warning the People of Basra about What Was to Occur..... 549
Sermon 156 Urging People Towards Piety (*Taqwa*) 553
Sermon 157 About the Holy Prophet (ص) and the Holy Qur'an 555
Sermon 158 Good Conduct with People, Ignoring Their Faults..... 555
Sermon 159 Praise of Allah 556
Sermon 160 Deputation of the Holy Prophet (ص) 559
Sermon 161 One of the companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) (from Banu Asad) asked him: "How was it that your tribe (Quraish) deprived you of this status (Caliphate) although you deserved it most?" In his reply, the Imam said the following.. 561
Sermon 162 The Attributes of Allah..... 562
Sermon 163 When people went to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in a deputation and complained to him about Othman, requesting him to speak to him on their behalf and to admonish him for their sake, he went to see `Othman to whom he said the following 564
Sermon 164 Describing the Wonderful Creation of the Peacock, the Wonderful Creation of Birds 569
Sermon 165 Advice for Observing Courtesy and Kindness and Keeping in and out of the Same. 572

Sermon 166 Delivered at the Inception of his Caliphate 573
Sermon 167 Having sworn allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), some people from among the companions of the Prophet (ص) said to him. "You should punish the people who assaulted Othman," whereupon he said the following..... 574
Sermon 168 When the people of Jamal set out for Basra, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following..... 575
Sermon 169 575
Sermon 170 When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) decided to fight the enemy face-to-face at Siffin he said the following: 576
Sermon 171 About the Consultative Committee and the Battle of Jamal576
Sermon 172 On the Eligibility for Caliphate 578
Sermon 173 About Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah..... 580
Sermon 174 Warning Neglectful People; the Vastness of His Knowledge 581
Sermon 175 Admonishing 586
Sermon 176 About the Two Arbiters (Following the Battle of Siffin) 589
Sermon 177 Praising Allah, Transience of this World and Causes of the Decline of Allah's Blessings (Delivered at the Beginning of His Caliphate after the Killing of Othman) 590
Sermon 178 Di'bil al-Yemeni asked Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) whether he had seen Allah. The Imam (ع) then replied, "Do I worship One Whom I have not seen?!" The man then inquired, "How have you seen Him?" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied as follows 591
Sermon 179 Condemning His Disobedient Men 591
Sermon 180 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent one of his men to bring him news of a group of the army of Kufa who had decided to join the Kharijites but were afraid of him. When the man came back, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him: "Are they satisfied and staying or feeling weak and going astray?" The man replied, "They have gone away, O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib!" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: 592
Sermon 181 It has been related by Nawf al-Bikali that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon at Kufa standing on a stone which Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi had placed for him. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had a woollen apparel on his body, the belt of his sword was made of leaves and the sandals on his feet too were of palm leaves. His forehead had a hardened spot like that a camel (on its knee, due to many and

long prostrations). About Allah's attributes, His creatures and His being above physical limitations 593
Sermon 182 Praising Allah for His Bounties 606
Sermon 183 One of the Kharijites, namely al-Burj ibn Mus'hir at-Ta'i, raised the call of "Command is fit for only Allah" in such a way that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard it. On hearing it he said the following: 608
Sermon 184 Praising Allah and His Wonderful Creatures 609
Sermon 185 The Oneness of Allah. Principles of Knowledge 611
Sermon 186 Regarding the Vicissitudes of Time (The Mischief That Is to Occur and the Absence of Lawful Ways of Livelihood) 615
Sermon 187 Allah's Favors 616
Sermon 188 Steadfastness *versus* a Transient Belief 617
Sermon 189 Importance of Fearing Allah, Desolateness of the Grave, Death of Those Who Love Ahl Al-bayt (ع) Similar to That of Martyrs 620
Sermon 190 Praising Allah 621
Sermon 191 Known as "al-Khutbah al-Qasi'a" (the Sermon of Disparagement) 623
Sermon 192 641
Sermon 193 Describing the Hypocrites 644
Sermon 194 Praising Allah, Advising about Fear of Allah and Providing Details about the Day of Judgement 645
Sermon 195 The Condition of the World at the Time of the Proclamation of Prophethood, the Transience of this World and the State of its Inhabitants 646
Sermon 196 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Attachment to the Holy Prophet (ص), Performance of Funeral Rites for Him (ص) 646
Sermon 197 Allah's Attribute of Omniscience 649
Sermon 198 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Advising His Companions about Prayers 652
Sermon 199 Treason and Treachery of Mu`awiyah and the Fate of Those Guilty of Treason 654
Sermon 200 One Should Not Be Afraid of the Scarcity of Those Who Tread on the Right Path 656
Sermon 201 What Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said on the Occasion of the Burial of the Supreme Lady, Fatima (ع), While Addressing the Holy Prophet (ص) at His Grave 657
Sermon 202 Transience of this World, the Importance of Collecting Provisions for the Next Life 659

Sermon 203 What Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Provided the Following General Advice to His Companions, Warning Them about the Perils of the Day of Judgement 659
Sermon 204 Having Sworn Allegiance to Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع), Talhah and Az-zubayr Complained to Him That He Had Not Consulted Them or Sought Their "Advice" in the Affairs (of State). Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Replied as Follows 660
Sermon 205 During the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Heard Some of His Men Verbally Abusing the Syrians, So He Said the Following 661
Sermon 206 In the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Saw Imam al-Hassan Proceeding Rapidly to Fight, So He Said the Following 661
Sermon 207 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Companions Expressed Displeasure about His Attitude Concerning the Arbitration, He Said the Following 661
Sermon 208 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Went to Inquire about the Health of His Companion Al-`Ala' Ibn Ziyad al-Harithi. When He Noticed the Vastness of His Mansion Estate, He Said the Following 662
Sermon 209 Someone Asked Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about Concocted Traditions and Contradictory Sayings of the Prophet (ص) Which Were Then in Circulation among the Public. The Imam Said the Following 667
Sermon 210 The Greatness of Allah and the Creation of the Universe 675
Sermon 211 About Those Who Give up Supporting Right 676
Sermon 212 Sublimity of Allah, Praising the Prophet (ص) 676
Sermon 213 The Prophet's Nobility of Descent 676
Sermon 214 A Prayer Which Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Often Recited 678
Sermon 215 Delivered at the Battle of Siffin Mutual Rights of the Ruler and the Ruled 678
Sermon 216 Excesses of the Quraishi Tribesmen 682
Sermon 217 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Passed by the Corpses of Talhah Ibn `Ubaydullah and `Abd Ar-rahman Ibn `Attab Ibn Asid, Who Were Both Killed in the Battle of Jamal, He Said the Following 682
Sermon 218 Qualities of the God-Fearing and the Pious 683

Sermon 219 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Recited the Verse Saying, "Engage (Your) Vying in Exuberance until You Come to the Graves" (Holy Quran, 102: 1-2) Then Said the Following 683
Sermon 220 Delivered after reciting this verse: "...therein are men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and are constantly praying and paying the poor-rate declare glory to Him in the mornings and the evenings; they fear the Day when the hearts and eyes shall writhe in anguish" (Holy Quran, 24: 36-37) 686
Sermon 221 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) recited this verse: "O you man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the most Gracious One?" (Holy Quran, 82: 6). Then he said the following …… 688
Sermon 222 About Keeping Aloof from Oppression and Misappropriation. Aqil's Condition of Poverty and Destitution 690
Sermon 223 Supplication 691
Sermon 224 Transience of the World, the Helplessness of Those Entombed 691
Sermon 225 Supplication 692
Sermon 226 About a Companion Who Passed Away from this World Before the Occurrence of Troubles 692
Sermon 227 Allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) for the Caliphate. (A similar sermon in somewhat different version has already been cited.) 698
Sermon 228 Fear of Allah, an Account of Those Who Remain Apprehensive of Death and Adopt Asceticism 698
Sermon 229 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon at Thi-Qar on his way to Basra. The historian al-Waqidi has mentioned it (in *Kitab al-Jamal*) 699
Sermon 230 Abdullah ibn Zama'ah, who was one of the followers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), came to him once during his Caliphate to ask for some money. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to him: 700
Sermon 231 On the Inability of Ja'dah Ibn Hubayrah Al-Makhzumi to Deliver a Sermon. About Speaking the Truth ..... …….. 700
Sermon 232 Causes of Differences in the Features and Traits of People 701
Sermon 233 Spoken When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Busy in the Funeral Ablution (*Ghusl*) and Shrouding of the Holy Prophet (ص) 703

Sermon 234 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Relating His Own Condition after the Prophet's Migration till Their Meeting 703
Sermon 235 About Preparing Provisions for the next World, While Being in this World, and Performing Good Deeds Before Death 705
Sermon 236 About the Two Arbitrators (Abu Musa al-Ash`ari and Amr Ibn Al-`As) and the Disparagement of the Syrians..... 705
Sermon 237 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Describes Here the Members of the Prophet's Family..... 706
Sermon 238 When `Othman ibn Affan was surrounded, `Abdullah ibn Abbas brought a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) from Othman in which the latter expressed the desire that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) go to his estate, Yanbu', so that the proposal that was being mooted out for him to become caliph would subside. Othman had made this same request earlier. Upon this, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to Ibn Abbas 706
Sermon 239 Exhorting His Men to Carry out Jihad, Asking Them to Refrain from Seeking a Life of Luxury 707

Part Nine

Selected Writings of our Master, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع)
His Letters to His Enemies And Governors of His Provinces, Including Selections of His Letters Appointing His Administrative Officers And Injunctions to Members of His Family And Companions

Letter 1 Addressed to the people of Kufa at the time of his march from Medina to Basra 708
Letter 2 Written to the People of Kufa after the Victory in Basra 710
Document 3 Written to Shurayh ibn al-Harith (al-Kindi), Kufa's Judge710
Letter 4 To One of the Officers of His Army 712
Letter 5 To al-Ash`ath ibn Qays (al-Kindi), Governor of Azerbaijan .. 713
Letter 6 To Mu`awiyah (ibn Abu Sufyan) 713
Letter 7 To Mu`awiyah 715
Letter 8 To Jarir Ibn Abdillah Al-bajali When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Sent Him to Mu`awiyah (And There Was a Delay in His Return) 715
Letter 9 To Mu`awiyah 716

Letter 10 To Mu`awiyah 719
Instruction 11Given to the Contingent Sent to Confront an Enemy 720
Instruction 12 Given to Ma`qil Ibn Qays ar-Riyahi as He Was Dispatched to Syria at the Command of a Vanguard Contingent of Three Thousand Strong..... 722
Letter 13 To Two Officers in His Army 723
Instruction 14 To the Army Before the Encounter with the Enemy at Siffin 724
Instruction 15 By Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) When He Used to Face the Enemy. 726
Instruction 16 He Used to Issue this Instruction to His Followers During Battle Time. 727
Letter 17 In Reply to a Letter from Mu`awiyah..... 727
Letter 18 To Abdullah ibn `Abbas, his Governor over Basra 731
Letter 19 To One of His Officers 732
Letter 20 To Ziyad Ibn Abih,when `Abdullah Ibn Abbas Was the Governor of Basra, the Suburbs of Ahwaz, Pars and Kirman, While Ziyad Was His Deputy in Basra. 732
Letter 21 Also to Ziyad 733
Letter 22 To Abdullah ibn `Abbas. `Abdullah ibn Abbas used to say, “Apart from the Prophet’s statements, I did not derive a greater benefit from any other statement.”..... 733
Will 23 Made Shortly Before His Death When He Had Been Fatally Wounded by a Blow from the Sword of (Abd Ar-rahman) Ibn Muljim (The Curse of Allah Be Upon Him)..... 733
Will 24 Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib’s Will Regarding How His Property Should Be Dealt With. He Wrote it upon His Return from Siffin. 734
Instruction 25 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) used to write the following to whoever he appointed for the collection of *zakat* and charities. Al-Sharif says the following:..... 735
Instruction 26 Given to One of His Officers Whom He Sent for the Collection of *Zakat* and Charities. 737
Instruction 27 Given to Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr (May Allah Be Pleased with Him), When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Appointed Him as Governor of Egypt: 738
Letter 28 In Reply to Mu`awiyah, One of His Most Elegant Writings: 739
Letter 29 To the people of Basra..... 748
Letter 30 To Mu`awiyah 748
Commandment 31 He Wrote it for His Son al-Hassan ibn Ali (ع) When He Camped at Al-Hadirin on His Way Back from Siffin: 749
Letter 32 To Mu`awiyah 759

Letter 33 To Othman ibn al-Abbas, his Governor over Mecca..... 759
Letter 34 To Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr on Coming to Know That He Had Assumed the Position of (Malik) Al-Ashtar as Governor of Egypt after the Latter Had Died on His Way to Egypt..... 760
Letter 35 To Abdullah Ibn Abbas after Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr Had Been Killed 760
Letter 36 To His Brother, Aqil ibn Abu Talib, in Reply to His Letter Containing a Reference to the Army Which Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Had Sent to Meet an Enemy 761
Letter 37 To Mu`awiyah 762
Letter 38 To the People of Egypt When He Appointed (Malik Ibn) al-Ashtar as Their Governor..... 763
Letter 39 To Amr ibn al-As 763
Letter 40 To One of His Officers..... 764
Letter 41To One of His Officers..... 764
Letter 42 To Umar Ibn Abu Salamah Al-Makhzumi (Foster-Son of the Holy Prophet (ص) from Umm Al-Mu'minin, Umm Salamah) Who Was Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Governor of Bahrain, but Whom He Removed and Replaced with An-nu'man Ibn Ajlan az-Zuraqi 765
Letter 43 To Masqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani, Governor of Ardashir Khurrah (Persia) 766
Letter 44 To Ziyad Ibn Abih When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Came to Know That Mu`awiyah Had Written to Ziyad to Deceive Him and to Attach Him to Himself in Kinship 766
Letter 45 To Othman Ibn Hunayf al-Ansari Who Was Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Governor of Basra When He Came to Know That the People of Basra Had Invited `Othman to a Banquet which He Attended 767
A short history of Fadak after the death of Fatima (ع): 780
Letter 46 To One of his Officers..... 787
Will 47 For Imam Al-hasan and Imam al-Hussain (ع) When (`Abd ar-Rahman) Ibn Muljim (the Curse of Allah be upon him) Struck Him Fatally with His Sword 787
Letter 48 To Mu`awiyah 789
Letter 49 To Mu`awiyah 789
Letter 50 To the Officers of His Army 789
Letter 51 To His (Land) Tax Collectors..... 790
Letter 52 To the Governors of Various Places Concerning Prayers 791
Document of Instruction 53 Written for (Malik) al-Ashtar an-Nakh`i, when the status of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr had become

precarious and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had appointed al-Ashtar as the Governor of Egypt and the surrounding areas. It is the longest document and contains the greatest number of beautiful statements 791
Qualifications of a Governor and his Responsibilities..... 792
Ruling should be in favor of the people as a whole 793
About Counselors..... 794
The different classes of people: 795
1. The Army 796
2. The Chief Judge 797
3. Executive Officers 798
4. The Administration of Revenues 798
5. The Clerical Establishment 799
6. Traders and Industrialists 800
7. The Lowest Class 800
Communion with Allah..... 801
On the Behavior and Action of a Ruler..... 802
Letter 54 To Talhah and az-Zubayr (through Imran ibn al-Hussain al-Khuza'i). Abu Ja`far al-Iskafi has mentioned this in his "Kitab al-Maqamat on the excellent qualities (*manaqib*) of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)." 808
Letter 55 To Mu`awiyah 809
Instruction 56 When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Placed Shurayh Ibn Hani (al-Madhhaji) at the Head of the Vanguard Preceding Towards Syria, He Issued this Document of Instruction to Him. 810
Letter 57 To the People of Kufa When He Marched from Medina to Basra 810
Letter 58 Written to the People of Various Localities Describing What Took Place Between Him and the People of Siffin 810
Letter 59 To al-Aswad ibn Qutbah, Governor of Hulwan 811
Letter 60 To the Officers Through Whose Jurisdictions the Army Passes 811
Letter 61 To Kumayl ibn Ziyad an-Nakh`i, Governor of Hit, Expressing Displeasure with His Inability to Prevent the Enemy Forces That Passed Through His Area from Marauding 812
Letter 62 To the People of Egypt Sent Through Malik al-Ashtar When He Was Made Governor 812
Letter 63 To Abu Musa (Abdullah ibn Qays) al-Ash`ari, Governor of Kufa when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) learned that he was dissuading the people of Kufa from joining the forces to fight

the battle of Jamal when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had called them to fight along with him: 815
Letter 64 Replying to Mu`awiyah 816
Letter 65 To Mu`awiyah 819
Letter 66 To Abdullah ibn Abbas 821
Letter 67 To Qutham ibn al-Abbas, his Governor over Mecca..... 821
Letter 68 To Salman al-Farisi Prior to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's Caliphate 822
Letter 69 To al-Harith (ibn `Abdillah, al-A`war) al-Hamdani 822
Letter 70 To Sahl Ibn Hunayf al-Ansari, His Governor over Medina, about Certain Persons in Medina Who Had Joined Mu`awiyah823
Letter 71 To Mundhir Ibn Jarud al-Abdi Who, in His Administrative Charge, Had Misappropriated Certain Things: 824
Letter 72 To Abdullah ibn Abbas 825
Letter 73 To Mu`awiyah 825
Document 74 Written by Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) as a Protocol between the Tribes of Rabi`ah and the People of Yemen, Taken from the Writing of Hisham Ibn (Muhammad) al-Kalbi.825
Letter 75 To Mu`awiyah, Soon after Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Sworn In. (Muhammad Ibn Umar) al-Waqidi Has Mentioned this Letter in His Book *Kitab al-Jamal:* 826
Instruction 76 Given to Abdullah ibn Abbas at the time of his appointment at his Governor of Basra: 826
Instruction 77 To Abdullah ibn Abbas at the Time of His Deputation to Confront the Kharijites: 826
Letter 78 To Abu Musa al-Ash`ari in Reply to the Latter's Letter Regarding the Two Arbitrators. Sa'id ibn Yahya al-Umawi Has Mentioned this in His *Akitab Al-Maghazi* 827
Letter 79 To the Army Officers When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Became Caliph 827

Part Ten

Selections : From the Sayings and Sermons of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Including His Replies to Questions and Maxims Made for Various Purposes 828
Faith, Unbelief, Doubt and Their Pillars 835
The Imam Admonishing His Son: 837
On the Subject of Predestination 845
About Those Who Unfairly Blame Life in This World 856

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Conversation with Kumayl Ibn Ziyad Al-Nakh`i 859
People are of three kinds: 859
On Preaching 861

Part Eleven

A Line Reference to some Contents of *Nahjul-Balagha* 935

Part Twelve

Bibliography for some Sources of *Nahjul-Balagha* 974

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

This is the first part of Martyr Mutahhari's book Sayr dar Nahjul-Balagha. It consists of the Introduction which the author presumably wrote before giving the book to the publisher, is dated Muharram 3, 1395 (January 15, 1975).

Part One

The book consists of **several parts**. In the **first**, he discusses the two main characteristics of Nahjul-Balagha, its literary excellence and multi-dimensionality, quoting various viewpoints expressed about Imam Ali's eloquence in general and Nahjul-Balagha in particular. In the **second part**, the author discusses the theological and metaphysical ideas embedded in Nahjul-Balagha, comparing them with parallel viewpoints with which Muslim orators and philosophers are familiar. The **third part** deals with ibada (adoration) and its various levels. The **fourth part** deals with the Islamic Government and Social Justice. The **fifth**, which deals with the controversial issue of caliphate (khilafa) and the superior status of Ahl al-Bayt (ع), is deleted from this translation. The **sixth and the seventh** parts discuss Nahjul-Balagha's ethical teachings, in particular the Islamic Concept of zuhd (asceticism), the meaning of the life in this world (dunya), so often condemned in Nahjul-Balagha, and the meaning of the contrast between life in this world and that in the Hereafter, which is also a recurring theme.

Introduction

Perhaps it may have happened to you, and if not, you may still visualize it: Someone lives on your street or in your neighborhood for years. You see him at least once a day and habitually nod to him as you pass by. Years pass by in this manner till, one day, you accidentally get an opportunity to sit down with him and become familiar with his ideas, views and feelings, his likes and dislikes. You are amazed at what you have come to know about him. You never imagined or guessed that he might be as you found him and never thought that he was what you later discovered him to be.

After that, every time you see him, his face, somehow, appears to you to be different. Not only this, your entire attitude towards him is altered. His personality assumes a new meaning and a new depth, and you develop respect for him in your heart, as if he were a person other than the one you thought you knew for years. You feel as if you have discovered a new world.

My experience was similar to such an analogy with regard to Nahjul-Balagha. Since the years of my childhood, I was familiar with the title of this book, and I could distinguish it from other books on the shelves in my father's library. Years later, during my studies, first at the theological school of Mashhad, and later at Qum, when I was finishing the last stages of the preliminary education in theology called sutuh, during all those days, I kept hearing the title Nahjul-Balagha more often than that of any other book after the Quran. Some of its sermons on piety I had heard so many times that I almost remembered them by heart. Nevertheless, I must admit, like all my colleagues at the theological seminary (hawza ilmiyya), I was quite ignorant of the world of Nahjul-Balagha. We had met as strangers and passed by each other in the manner of strangers. This went on till the summer of 1325 (1946) when, in order to escape the heat of Qum, I went to Isfahan. A trivial incident brought me into contact with a person who took my hand and led me somehow into the world of Nahjul-Balagha.

When this happened, I realized that till then, I knew little about this book. Later, I wished that I would also find someone who would introduce me to the world of the Quran. Since then, the image of Nahjul-Balagha was transformed in my eyes. I became fond of it, and gradually my fondness grew into love. It was now a different book from the one which I had known till that moment. I felt as if I had discovered an entirely new world. Shaikh Muhammad `Abdo, the former mufti of Egypt

who edited and published Nahjul-Balagha with a brief commentary, introducing this book to the Egyptians for the first time, says that he had no knowledge of this book till he undertook its study far from home in a distant land.

He was struck with amazement and felt as if he had discovered a precious treasure trove. He, thereupon, immediately decided to publish and introduce it to the Arab public. The unfamiliarity of a Sunni scholar with Nahjul-Balagha is not surprising; what is surprising is that Nahjul-Balagha should be a stranger and alien in its own homeland, among the Shi`a of Ali (ع), and that in the Shi`i theological schools as well, in the same way as Ali (ع) himself has remained isolated, a stranger in his own land. Evidently, if the content and ideas of a book, or if the feelings and emotions of a person, do not harmonize with the mentality of a people, that book/person practically remains isolated like a stranger in an alien world, even though the name of such a person/book may be mentioned with great respect and admiration.

We, theology students, must admit our estrangement from Nahjul-Balagha. We have built a mental world of our own which is alien to the world of Nahjul-Balagha. As I write this Preface, I cannot abstain from recalling with sorrow the memory of that great man who introduced me for the first time to the world of Nahjul-Balagha and whose acquaintance I treasure as one of the most precious experiences of my life, something which I would not exchange for anything else. Not a day nor a night passes without my remembering him or mentioning him with gratitude. I daresay that he was a divine scholar (alim rabbani) in the true sense of the word, although I dare not claim that I was a learner of the path of deliverance (muta'allim 'ala sabil al-najat).[1] I remember that whenever I met him, I was always reminded of the following poetry of [the renown Persian poet] Sadi:

The devout, the ascetic, and the Subi,
Are all toddlers on the path;
If there is any mature man,
It is none other than the 'alim rabbani.

He was a faqih, a philosopher, a man of letters and a physician, all at the same time. He was well versed in fiqh (jurisprudence), philosophy, Arabic and Persian literature as well as in the traditional

[1] *Nahjul-Balagha,* **sermon 193.**

medicine. And he was considered a specialist of the first order in some of these fields. He was a masterly teacher of al-Qanun, the treatise of iIn Sina (Avicenna) in medicine, which does not find a teacher these days. Many scholars of the theology school attended his lessons. Yet it was not possible for him to confine himself to one single field, and his spirit revolted against any kind of restrictions. Of his lectures, the most that interested him were those on Nahjul-Balagha which threw him into ecstasy. It seemed as if Nahjul-Balagha had opened its wings and he, having mounted them, was taken on a journey through strange worlds beyond our reach.

It was evident that he lived on Nahjul-Balagha; he lived it and breathed with it. His spirit was united with this book; his pulse throbbed and his heart beat in harmony with Nahjul-Balagha. Its sentences were always on his lips and their meanings engraved upon his heart. When he quoted its passages, tears would flow from his eyes, soaking his gray beard. During the lessons, his encounter with and involvement in Nahjul-Balagha would make him totally oblivious of his surroundings. It was a very educative as well as an attractive spectacle. Listening to the language of the heart from someone whose great heart is full of love and wisdom has altogether a different effect and attraction. He was a living example of the saints of the bygone days. These words of Ali (ع) fully apply to him: "Had it not been for the fact that Providence had decreed the years of their life, the passionate yearning for Divine rewards and fear of chastisement would not have permitted their souls to remain in their bodies even for a moment. Their realization of the greatness of the Creator has made everything besides Him insignificant in their eyes."

This refined man of letters, the speculative philosopher, the great faqih, the adept man of medicine and the excellent master of theology was the late Hajj Mirza Ali Aqa al-Shirazi al-Isfahani, sanctified by Allah, a man of truth and wisdom who had attained deliverance from the finite self and selfhood and had merged with the Infinite Truth.

In spite of his sublime scholarly status and eminent social status, his sense of commitment to the society and burning love for Imam al-Hussain (ع) compelled him to deliver sermons from the minbar. His sermons, since they came from the heart, had a deep effect on the hearts of his listeners. Whenever he visited Qum, the scholars of the first rank would persuade him to deliver his sermons from the minbar.[2] His sermons

[2] *Minbar* is a raised platform with steps, the Islamic pulpit. Traditionally, the function of speaking at mourning gatherings, the *majalis*, has

were charged with a passionate purity and sincerity that rendered them profoundly effective. They were not just words to be heard but a spiritual state to be experienced.

He, however, refrained from leading congregational prayers. One year, during the holy month of Ramadan, after a great deal of persuasion, he accepted to lead the prayers at Madrasat al-Sadr for that month. In spite of the fact that he did not come regularly and refused to stick to any regular schedule, unprecedented crowds of people came to attend the prayers led by him. I heard that such strength declined in the jamaat in the neighborhood mosques and he, too, discontinued.

As far as I know, the people of Isfahan generally knew him in person and liked him. He was also loved at the theology school of Qum. The Ulama of Qum would eagerly set out to see him at the news of his arrival in the city. Like all other restrictions, he also refused to be bound by the conditions set for having admirers and followers. May Allah shower His infinite mercy upon him and lodge him in the company of His awliya on the Day of Resurrection.

Despite all his merits, I do not claim that he was familiar with all the worlds which Nahjul-Balagha embraces or that he had set his foot in all the domains encompassed by it. He had explored only a portion of its realms, and that a portion of Nahjul-Balagha had been incarnated in his personality. The universe of Nahjul-Balagha includes numerous worlds: The world of zuhd (renunciation of worldly pleasures) and taqwa (piety), the world of ibada (worship, devotion) and irfan (mystic knowledge), the world of hikma (wisdom) and philosophy, the world of moral preaching and guidance, the world of eschatology (malahim) and mysteries (mughayyabat), the world of politics and social responsibilities, the world of heroism and bravery, etc. too many worlds to be conquered by any single individual. Hajj Mirza Ali Aqa al-Shirazi had explored only a portion of this great ocean and knew it well.

Nahjul – Balagha and present day's Islamic Society

The alienation from Nahjul-Balagha was not confined to me or to others like me. It pervaded through the Islamic society. Those who understood this book, their knowledge did not go beyond the translation

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been performed in Iran by the *mullahs*, or *ruhaniyyun*, as they are called there. –Tr.

of its words and the explanatory notes for its sentences. The spirit and the content of the book were hidden from the eyes of everyone. Only lately, it may be said, has the Islamic world begun to explore Nahjul-Balagha. In other words, Nahjul-Balagha has just started its conquest of the Muslim world.

What is surprising is that one part of Nahjul-Balagha, in Shi`ite Iran as well as in Arab countries, was first discovered either by atheists or non-Muslim theists who revealed the greatness of the book to the Muslims. Of course, the purpose of most or all of them was to utilize Nahjul-Balagha of Ali (ع) for justifying and confirming their own social views. But the outcome was exactly the opposite of what they had desired. This is so because, for the first time, the Muslims have realized that the views expressed grandiloquently by others have nothing new to offer, and that they cannot surpass what is said in Nahjul-Balagha of Ali (ع) or translated into action through the conduct (sira) of Ali (ع) and his disciples such as Salman al-Farisi, Abu Dharr and `Ammar. The outcome was that instead of supporting the pretentious views of those who wished to exploit Nahjul-Balagha, Ali (ع) and his book defeated their purpose. Nevertheless, it must be accepted that before this had taken place, most of us had little knowledge of Nahjul-Balagha, and it hardly went beyond appreciation of few sermons about the virtues of piety and abstinence. Nobody had yet recognized the significance of the valuable epistle of Master Ali (ع) to Malik al-Ashtar al-Nakhi; nobody had paid any attention to it.

As stated in the first and second chapters of this book, Nahjul-Balagha is a collection of sermons, precepts, epistles and aphorisms of Ali (ع) compiled by Sayyid al-Sharif ar-Radi almost a thousand years ago. However, neither the recorded words of Master Ali (ع) are confined to those collected by Sayyid ar-Radi, nor was he the only man to compile the sayings of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع). Al-Mas`udi, who lived a hundred years before Sayyid ar-Radi, in the second Volume of his work Muruj al-Dhahab, writes the following: "At present, there are over 480 sermons of Ali (ع) in the hands of the people, whereas the total number of sermons included by Sayyid ar-Radi in his collection is only 239.

There are, at present, two kinds of work that must be accomplished with respect to Nahjul-Balagha, so that Ali's thought and views on various important issues expressed in Nahjul-Balagha, which are still relevant and are direly needed by the present-day Islamic society,

may be brought to light. The second kind of work required in relation to Nahjul-Balagha is researching the sources (asnad) and the documents relevant to its contents. Fortunately, we hear that Muslim scholars in various parts of the Islamic world are devoting themselves to undertaking both of these important tasks.

This book is a collection of a series of articles which originally appeared in the journal Maktab-e-Islam during from 1351 - 52 (1972-73), now presented to the learned readers in the form of the present book. Formerly, I had delivered five lectures on this topic at the Hussainiyyah Irshad.[3] Later, I took up with the idea of writing a series of articles to deal with the subject in greater detail.

From the outset, when I chose to call it "Sayr dar Nahjul-Balagha"(A Journey into Nahjul-Balagha), I was aware that my attempt would not deserve to be called more than a journey, or a short trip. This work, by no means, deserves to be called a research. I neither had the time nor the opportunity to conduct a research, nor did I consider myself fit for undertaking such a task. Moreover, a profound and comprehensive research study of the contents of Nahjul-Balagha, an exploration of the ideology of Ali (ع), and, besides, a research about documenting its contents, is the job of a group, not of a single individual. But, as it is said, that which cannot be attained in its entirety is not to be abandoned entirely[4]. And since humble attempts open the way for great tasks, I embarked upon my journey. Unfortunately, even this journey was not completed. The project that I had prepared for, and which the reader shall find mentioned in the third chapter, remained incomplete because of many preoccupations. I do not know if I will ever get the opportunity to continue my journey through Nahjul-Balagha. But it is my great desire to be able to do so.

A Literary Marvel

Nahjul-Balagha is a magnificent collection of the inimitable sermons, invocations (du'as), wills or pieces of advice, epistles and aphorisms of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع),

[3] *Hussainiyyeh Irshad* is a building in Tehran founded by the late Dr. Ali Shariati. —Tr.

[4] This is in reference to an Arabic maxim: *That which cannot be attained in entirety is not to be abandoned completely*.

compiled by Sayyid al-Sharif ar-Radi (may Allah be pleased with him) about one thousand years ago. Time and years have not only failed to diminish the impressive freshness of this work but have, instead, added constantly to its value as new concepts and ideas have emerged therefrom.

Ali (ع) was undoubtedly a man of eloquence. He delivered a large number of speeches that became famous. Likewise, numerous sayings containing philosophical wisdom were heard from him. He wrote many letters, especially during the days of his caliphate, which his admirers recorded and preserved with remarkable interest and zeal. Al-Mas`udi (d. 346/955-6), who lived almost a hundred years before Sayyid ar-Radi (d. 406/1115), in the second Volume of his book titled Muruj al-Dhahab, under the heading "Fi dhikr luma' min kalamih, wa akhbarih, wa zuhdih, says the following:

That which has been preserved by people of Ali's sermons, delivered on various occasions, exceeds 480 in number. Ali (ع) used to deliver his extempore sermons without any prior preparation. The people recorded[5] his words and practically derived benefit from them.[6]

The testimony of an informed researcher and scholar like al-Mas`udi bears out the large number of Ali's speeches that were extant during his time. Only 239 of these have been handed down to us in Nahjul-Balagha, whereas their number, as mentioned by al-Mas`udi, was more than 480.

Moreover, al-Mas`udi informs us about the extraordinary dedication and ardor of various groups of people in recording and preserving Ali's words.

Sayyid Al-radi and Nahjul-Balagha

Sayyid al-Sharif ar-Radi, or Sayyid ar-Radi, as he is commonly called, was an ardent admirer of Ali's speeches. He was a scholar, a poet and a man of cultivated taste. Al-Tha`alibi, his contemporary, says the following about him:

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[5]Here, it is not clear whether al-Mas'udi means that Ali's sermons were recorded in writing, in books, or if he implies that people preserved them by memorizing them, or if he means both.

[6]al-Mas`udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab,* (Beirut, 1983), Vol. 2, p. 431.

He is the most remarkable man among his contemporary and the noblest amongst the Sayyids of Iraq. Family and descent aside, he is fully adorned and endowed with literary excellence. He is the most remarkable poet among the descendants of Abu Talib, though there are many distinguished poets among them. To say that of all the tribesmen of Quraish no poet could ever surpass him would not be an exaggeration.[7]

It was on account of Sayyid ar-Radi's earnest love for literature in general, and his admiration of Ali's discourses in particular, that his interest was mainly literary in compiling Ali's words. Consequently, he paid a greater attention to those passages which were more prominent from the literary point of view. This was the reason why he named his anthology ANahjul-Balagha[8]

which means the "path of eloquence,"giving little importance to mentioning his sources, a point rarely ignored by compilers of hadith (traditions). Only at times does he casually mention the name of a certain book from which a particular sermon or epistle has been cited. In a book of history or hadith, it is of primary importance that the sources be precisely identified; otherwise, little credence can be given to it. The value of a literary masterpiece, however, lies in its intrinsic beauty, subtlety, elegance and depth. Meanwhile, it is not possible to assert that Sayyid ar-Radi was entirely oblivious of the historical value and other dimensions of this sacred work, or that his attention was exclusively absorbed by its literary qualities.

Fortunately, after Sayyid ar-Radi, others took up the task of collecting the asnad of Nahjul-Balagha. Perhaps the most comprehensive book in this regard is Nahjul-Saada fi Mustadrak Nahjul-Balagha by Muhammad Baqir al-Mahmudi, a distinguished Shia scholar of Iraq. In this valuable book, all of Ali's extant speeches, sermons, decrees, epistles, supplications and sayings have been collected. It includes Nahjul-Balagha and other discourses which were not incorporated by Sayyid ar-Radi or were unavailable to him. Apparently, except for some aphorisms, the

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[7]al-Thaalibi as quoted by Muhammad `Abdo in *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Introduction, p. 9.

[8]*Nahj* means an open way, a road, a course, a method, a path, or a manner; *balaghah* means eloquence, the are of good style and communication, rhetoric, etc.

original sources of all the contents of Nahjul-Balagha have been accounted for.[9]

It should be mentioned that Sayyid ar-Radi was not the only man to compile a collection of Ali's utterances; others, too, have compiled various books with different titles in this field. The most famous of them is Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim by al-Amudi on which Muhaqqiq [verifier] Jamal al-Din al-Khunsari has written a commentary in Persian which has been recently printed by the University of Tehran through the efforts of the eminent scholar Mir Jalal al-Din, the al-Urumawi traditionist.

Ali al-Jundi, dean of the faculty of sciences at the Cairo University, in the Introduction to the book titled Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): Shiruh wa Hikam cites a number of these collections some of which have not yet appeared in print and still exist as manuscripts. These are:

1. Dustur Ma`alim al-Hikam by al-Qudai, the author of Al-Khutat;

2. Nathr al-Laa li; this book has been translated and published by a Russian Orientalist in one bulky Volume.

3. Hikam Sayyidina Ali (ع): A manuscript of this book exists in the Egyptian library, Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyya.

Two distinctive characteristics

Since the earliest times, two distinct merits have been recognized as distinguishing Ali's discourses: Firstly, literary elegance (fasaha) and eloquence (balagha); secondly, their characteristic multi-dimensional nature. Any of these two qualities suffices for regarding Ali's words as valuable, but the combination of these two qualities (i.e. matchless eloquence, literary elegance and their multi-dimensional nature in that they deal with diverse and occasionally incompatible spheres of life) has made it almost miraculous. For this reason, Ali's speech enjoys a status in-between the speech of the human being and the Word of Allah. Indeed, it has been said of it that it is above the speech of beings and below the Word of the Creator.[10]

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[9]Here, the author adds that "Till now, four Volumes of this book have been published."

[10]The arabic is: *fawqa kalamil makhluq wa duna kalam ul Khaliq.*

Literary beauty and elegance

This aspect of Nahjul-Balagha requires no introduction. Any reader of a cultivated literary taste, one capable of appreciating linguistic elegance and charm, surely realizes it. Basically, beauty is something perceived and experienced and not described or defined. Nahjul-Balagha, even after nearly fourteen centuries, has retained the same attractiveness, freshness, charm and beauty for the present-day audience that it provided the people of earlier days. Here, we do not intend to give an elaborate proof of this claim. Nevertheless, as a part of our discourse, we shall briefly describe the marvelous power of the words of Ali (ع) in moving hearts and infusing them with the feeling of wonder. We shall start with Ali's own times and follow the effect of his discourses through the changes and variations in taste, outlook and mode of thought during different successive ages up to the present day.

The companions of Ali (ع), particularly those who had a taste for language and literary grace, greatly admired him as an orator. Abdullah ibn Abbas is one of them. He, as al-Jahiz points out in his Al-Bayan wal-Tbyin[11], was a powerful orator. He did not conceal his passion for listening to Ali (ع) speak or the enjoyment he derived from it. Once, when Ali (ع) was delivering his famous sermon called al-Shaqshaqiyya[12], ibn `Abbas was also present. While Ali (ع) was speaking, an ordinary man from Kufa handed him a piece of paper containing some questions, thus causing Ali (ع) to discontinue his speech. Ali (ع), after reading the sheet of paper, did not continue his speech in spite of Ibn Abbas urging him to do so. Ibn Abbas later expressed his deep regret on that occasion, saying, "Never in my life was I ever so sorry for interrupting a speech as I was for interrupting this sermon.[13]

Referring to a certain letter that Ali (ع) had written to Ibn Abbas, the latter used to say, "Except for the speech of the Holy Prophet (ص), I did not derive so much benefit from any utterance as I did from this one."[14]

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[11] al-Jahiz, *Al-Bayan wal-tabyin,* Vol. I p. 230.
[12] *Nahjul-Balagha,* Khutab, No. 3.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid. Rasa'il,* No. 22.

Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, Ali's most contumacious enemy, also acknowledged the Imam's extraordinary eloquence. When Muhqin ibn Abu Muhqin forsook Ali (ع) and joined Muawiyah, in order to please Muawiyah, whose heart surged with ill-will and bitterness towards Ali (ع), he told him, AI have left the dumbest of men and come to you. The flagrancy of this kind of flattery was so obvious that Muawiyah himself reproached him saying: "Woe unto you! Do you really call Ali (ع) the dumbest of men?! Quraish knew nothing about eloquence before him. It was he who taught them the are of eloquence."

Effect of Ali's Oratory

Those who heard Ali (ع) speaking from the minbar were very much affected by his words. His sermons made hearts tremble and drew tears from the eyes. Even today, who can hear or read Ali's sermons without a tremor passing through his heart? Sayyid ar-Radi, after narrating Ali's famous sermon al-Gharra'[15], says the following: "As Ali (ع) delivered his sermon, tears flowed from the eyes of the listeners and hearts quivered with emotion.

Hamman ibn Shurayh, one of Ali's companions, was a man with a heart full of love for Allah and a soul burning with spiritual fire. At one time, he requested Ali (ع) to describe the qualities of the pious and the God-fearing. Ali (ع), on the one hand, did not want to turn down his request and, on the other, he was concerned that Hamman might not be able to bear what Ali (ع) would say. He, therefore, evaded this request, giving only a perfunctory description of piety and the pious. Hamman was not only dissatisfied with this, his eagerness was heightened, so he beseeched Ali (ع) to speak with greater elaboration. Ali (ع) commenced his famous sermon and began to describe the characteristics of the truly pious. He enumerated about one hundred and five[16] qualities of such human beings and went on to describe more. But as Ali's words flowed in fiery sequence, Hamman was carried away to the very extremes of ecstasy. His heart throbbed terribly and his spirit was driven to the furthermost limits of emotion. It advanced in eagerness like a restless bird trying to break out of its cage. Suddenly, there was a terrible cry and the

[15] *Ibid. Rasa'il,* No. 83.

[16] According to my own counting, if I have not made a mistake.

audience turned around to find out that it came from no other man than Hamman himself. Approaching him, they found out that his soul had already left its earthly abode to embrace an everlasting life. When this happened, Ali's remark, which carried both praise and regret, was: "I feared this would happen. Strange, yet this is how effective admonition affects sensitive hearts.[17] This is an example of the kind of influence which Ali's sermons had over the minds and the hearts of his contemporaries.

Views of Ancient and Modern Scholars

After the Holy Prophet (ص), Ali (ع) alone has the distinction of being one whose speeches and sayings were recorded and preserved by the people with particular care.

Ibn Abul-Hadid quotes 'Abdul-Hamid al-Katib, the great master of Arabic prose[18] who lived during the early part of the second Hijri century, as saying, "I learned by heart seventy sermons of Ali (ع), and from that time onwards, my mind always overflowed [with inspiration]."

Ali al-Jundi also relates that when `Abdul-Hamid was asked about what had helped him most in attaining literary excellence, he replied, "Memorizing the discourses of the "bald one".[19]

Throughout the Islamic history, the name of `Abdul-Rahman ibn Nubatah is proverbial for oratory among Arabs. He acknowledges that his intellectual and artistic attainments are indebted to Ali (ع). Ibn Abul-Hadid quotes him as saying: "I committed to memory about a hundred

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[17]*Nahjul-Balagha, Khutab,* No. 193.

[18]Abdul-Hamid was a scribe (*katib*) at the court of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan ibn Muhammad. Of Persian origin, he was the teacher of the famous Ibn al-Muqaffa. It was said of him, AThe are of writing began with Abdul-Hamid and ended with ibn al-Amid. Ibn al-Amid was a minister to the Buwayhids.

[19]*Asla* means someone whose frontal status, portion of the head, is bald. Abdul-Hamid, while admitting the greatness of Imam Ali (ع), mentions him in a detracting manner due to his attachment to the Umayyad court.

discourses of Ali (ع); since then, this has served me as an inexhaustible treasure [of inspiration]."

Al-Jahiz was a celebrated literary genius of the early third century of the Hijra, and his book Al-Bayan wal-Tabyin is regarded as one of the four main classics of Arabic literature[20]. Often, in his book, he expresses his great wonder and immense admiration for Ali's discourses. From his remarks, it is evident that a large number of Ali's sermons were commonly known to the people of his day. In the first Volume of his Al-Bayan wal-Tabyin[21], after mentioning that some people praise precision in speech or prefer silence and disapprove profusion, al-Jahiz writes the following: "The profusion of speech that has been regarded with disapproval is futile talk, not so what is fruitful and illuminating; otherwise, Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and `Abdullah ibn `Abbas were men of prolific speech.

In the same Volume of his work, he quotes this famous sentence of Ali (ع)[22]: "The value of a man lies in what he has mastered."[23]

Al Jahiz then devotes half a page to expressing his admiration for this sentence and writes further:

"If our book did not contain anything but this sentence, it would suffice it. The best speech is one the little of which makes you dispense with much of it, one in which the meanings are not concealed within words but stand out."

Then he remarks saying, "It appears as if Allah the Almighty has enveloped it with His glory and covered it with the light of wisdom proportionate to the piety and taqwa of its speaker."

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[20]The other three being: *Adab al-kitab* of Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Kamil,* of al-Mubarrad, and *al-Nawadir* of Abu Ali (ع) al-Qali: quoted from the introduction to *Al-Bayan wal-Tabyin* by ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddamah*.

[21]*al-Bayan wa al-tabyin,* Vol. I p. 202.

[22]*Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 83.

[23]*Nahjul-Balagha, Hikam,* No. 81. See also Sayyid ar-Radi's comment on this aphorism.

Al-Jahiz, in the same work, where he discusses the oratory of Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-`Abdi[24], says the following: "No greater proof of his excellence as an orator is required than the fact that Ali (ع) occasionally came to him and asked him to deliver a speech.

Sayyid ar-Radi's following remarks in appreciation and praise of the speech of Imam Ali (ع) are famous: Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع) was the reservoir and fountainhead of eloquence which derived its principles from his speeches and revealed its secrets through him. Every orator of mark tried to imitate him and every preacher learned from him the are of eloquence. Nevertheless, others lagged far behind him while he excelled them all. His speech (alone) bears the imprint of Divine Wisdom and the fragrance of the Prophet's eloquence.

Ibn Abul-Hadid is a Mutazilite scholar of the 7th Hijri/13th A.D. century. He was a masterly writer and an adept poet, and, as we know, a man who adored Ali's discourses. Accordingly, he expressed his profound admiration for Ali (ع) repeatedly throughout his book. In the Introduction to his famous commentary on Nahjul-Balagha, he writes the following: "Truly have Ali's discourse been regarded as inferior only to that of the Creator and superior to that of all creatures. All people have learned the arts of oration and writing from him. Suffices to say that people have not recorded even one-tenth of one-twentieth of the speech of any other companion of the Prophet (ص), of what they recorded and preserved of Ali's discourses, although there were many eloquent persons among them."

Again, it is sufficient that a man such as al-Jahiz has so much praise for Ali (ع) in his book Al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin.

Ibn Abul-Hadid, in the fourth Volume of his commentary, says the following about Imam Ali's letter to Abdullah ibn Abbas (written after the fall of Egypt to Muawiyah's forces and the martyrdom of

[24]Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-Abdi was one of the eminent companions of Imam Ali (ع). When, after the death of the third caliph, Ali (ع) became the caliph. It was Sa`sa`ah who said to him: *You [by assuming the caliphate] have given it beauty, while caliphate has not added luster to your personality. You have raised its worth, and it has not raised your station. It stands in a greater need of you than you need it*.

Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, a letter in which Ali [ع] breaks the news of this disaster to Abdullah, who was then in Basra)[25]:

"Look how eloquence has given its reins into the hands of this man and is docile to his every signal! Observe the wonderful order of words coming one after the other to bow in his presence, or gushing like a spring that flows effortlessly out of the ground. Praise be to Allah! An Arab youth grows up in a town like Mecca, one who has never met any sage or philosopher, yet his discourses have surpassed those of Plato and Aristotle in eloquence and profundity. He has no discourse with men of wisdom, yet he has surpassed Socrates. He has not grown up among warriors and heroes but amongst traders and merchants, for the people of Mecca were not a warrior nation but traders, yet he emerges as the greatest of all warriors of supreme courage who have ever walked on the face of earth."Al-Khalili ibn Ahmed [al-Farahidi, the renown linguist] was asked once: "Of Ali (ع), Bastam, and `Anbasah, who was the most courageous?"Replied he, "Bastam and `Anbasah should be compared with other men; Ali (ع) was superior to human beings. He came from Quraish who were not the foremost in eloquence, for the most eloquent among Arabs were Banu Jurham, although they were not famous for wisdom or wit. Yet Ali (ع) surpassed even Sahban ibn Wa'il and Qays ibn Sadah in eloquence."

Modern Perspectives

During the fourteen centuries that have passed since Ali's times, the world has seen innumerable changes in language, culture and taste. One may be led to think that Ali's discourses, although they might have invoked the adoration of the ancient ones, may not suit the modern taste. But one would be surprised to learn that such is not the case at all. From the point of view of literary form and content, Ali's discourses have the rare quality of transcending the limits imposed by time and place. That Ali's discourses are universal in their appeal to men of all times we shall discuss later. Here, after quoting the views of classical writers, we shall quote the relevant views expressed by our contemporaries.

The late Shaikh Muhammad Abdo, formerly Mufti of Egypt, is a man who came to know Nahjul-Balagha by accident. This preliminary acquaintance grew into a passionate love for the sacred book, leading him

[25] *Nahjul-Balagha, Rasaail,* No. 35.

into writing a commentary on it. It also prompted him to undertake making it popular among the Arab youths. In the Preface to his commentary, he says the following: “Among all those who speak the Arabic language, there is not a single man who does not believe that Ali’s discourses, after the Quran and the ahdith of the Prophet (ص), are the most noble, the most eloquent, the most profound and the most comprehensive.”

Ali al-Jundi, once Dean of the Faculty of Sciences at the Cairo University, in his book titled Ali ibn Abu Talib: Shi`ruhu wa Hikamuh, writing about Ali’s prose saying the following: “A certain musical rhythm which moves the innermost depths of the soul is characteristic of these discourses. The phrases are so rhymed that it can be called poetic prose.

He then quotes Qudamah ibn Jafar as saying: “Some have shown mastery in short sayings and others in long discourses, but Ali (ع) has surpassed all others in both of these, even as he has surpassed them in other merits as well.”

Taha Hussain, the renown Egyptian writer, in his book Ali wa Banuh (Ali [ع] and His Sons), recounts the story of a particular man during the Battle of al-Jamal. The man is in doubt as to which of the two sides is on the right track. He says to himself, “How is it possible that such personalities like Talhah and az-Subayr should be at fault? He informs Ali (ع) of his dilemma and asks him whether it is possible that such great personalities and men of established repute should be in error.”Ali (ع) answered him in the following: “You are seriously mistaken and have reversed the measure! Truth and falsehood are not measured by the worth of individuals. First, find out what is true and what is false, then you will see who stands by the truth and who is with falsehood.”

What Ali (ع) means is: “You have reversed your measuring criteria. Truth and falsehood are not measured by the nobility of birth or by how base and lowly one’s birth is. Instead of regarding truth and falsehood as the measure of nobility and meanness, you prejudge persons by your own pre-conceived notions of nobility and meanness. Reverse your approach. First of all, find out the truth itself, then you will be able to recognize who are truthful. Find out what falsehood is, then you will identify those who are wrong. lt is not significant which person stands by the truth and which one sides with falsehood.”

After quoting Ali's above-mentioned reply, Taha Hussain says the following: "Next to the Revealed Word of Allah, I have never seen a more glorious and admirably expressed view than this reply of Ali (ع)."

Shakib Arsalan, nicknamed "Amir al-Bayan"(the master of clear speech), is another celebrated writer. Once in a gathering held in his honor in Egypt, a speaker mounted the rostrum and, in the course of his speech, remarked saying, "There are two individuals in the history of Islam each one of whom can truly be called Amir al-Bayan: one is Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and the other is Shakib [Arsalan]. It was then that Shakib Arsalan (1871-1946) felt very irritated. He left his seat and walked to the rostrum. Deploring the comparison which his friend had just made between Ali (ع) and himself, he said: "What comparison can there be between Ali (ع) and me?! I am not worth to be compared even to the strap of Ali's sandals![26]

In the Introduction to the book titled Imam Ali (ع) by George Jurdaq, a Lebanese Christian writer, Michael Naimah, also a Lebanese Christian writer, says the following: "Ali (ع) was not only a champion on the battlefield but also a hero in all other fields: in the sincerity of heart, in the purity of conscience, in the spell-binding magic of speech, in true humanitarianism, in the fineness and warmth of faith, in the height of tranquility, in the readiness to help the oppressed and the wronged, and in total submission to the truth wherever it may be and whichever form it assumes. He was a hero in all these fields."

I do not intend to quote more from the writings of those who paid tributes to Ali (ع), for the above-quoted remarks are sufficient to prove my point. One who praises Ali (ع) extols his own merit for:

He who admires the Sun's brilliance extols himself:.

My two eyes are bright and my vision is not clouded.

I conclude my discourse with Ali's own statement about himself. One day, one of his companions attempted to deliver a speech. He could not; he found himself tongue-tied. Ali (ع) said to him: "You should know

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[26]This anecdote was related by Muhammad Jawad Maghniyyah, a contemporary Lebanese scholar, at the occasion of a reception party given in his honor in the holy city of Mashhad.

that the tongue is a part of man and under the command of his mind. If the mind lacks stimulation and refuses to budge, his tongue will not assist him. However, if the mind is ready, his speech will not give him a respite. Indeed, we (Ahl al-Bayt) are the masters of (the domain of) speech. In us are sunk its roots and over us are hung its branches."[27]

Al Jahiz, in the al-Bayan wa al-tabyin, relates from `Abdullah ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali (ع) that Ali (ع) once said: "We (Ahl al-Bayt) are superior to others in five qualities: eloquence, good looks, forgiveness, courage, and popularity with women!"[28]

Now, we shall take up another characteristic of Ali's discourses which, in fact, is the main theme of this book, that is, multi-dimensionality.

Nahjul-Balagha among Literary Classics

Most nations possess certain literary works which are regarded as "masterpieces"or "classics". Here, we shall limit our discussion to the classics of Arabic and Persian literature whose merits are more or less perceptible by us, leaving the other classics of the ancient world, of Greece and Rome and so on, and the masterpieces of the modern age from Italy, England, France and other countries to be discussed and evaluated by those who are familiar with them and are qualified to discuss them.

Of course, an accurate judgement about the classics of Arabic and Persian is possible only for scholars who have specialized in classical literature. But it is an accepted fact that everyone of these masterpieces is great only in a particular aspect, not in each and every aspect. To be more precise, everyone of the authors of these classics displayed his mastery only in a single, specific field to which his ingenuity was confined. Occasionally, if one left his special field to tread other grounds, he failed miserably.

In Persian, there are numerous masterpieces in mystical ghazal, general ghazal, qasidah, epic, spiritual and mystical allegorical poetry, etc. But, as we know, none of the world renown Persian poets has succeeded in creating masterpieces in all these literary forms. Hafiz is famous for mystical ghazal, Sadi for anecdotes and general ghazal, Firdawsi for epic, Rumi for his allegorical and spiritual poetry, Khayyam

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[27] *Nahjul-Balagha, Khutab,* No. 230.
[28] al-Jahiz, *op. cit.* Vol. 2, p. 99.

for his philosophic pessimism and Nizami for something else. For this reason, it is not possible to compare them with one another or prefer one over the other. All that can be said is that each one of them is foremost in his own field. If occasionally one of these poetic geniuses left his special field to try another literary form, a visible decline in quality was readily perceptible. The same is true of Arab poets of the Islamic and pre-Islamic periods. There is an anecdote in Nahjul-Balagha that once Ali (ع) was asked this question: "Who is the foremost among Arab poets? Ali (ع) replied: "To be sure, all poets did not tread one and the same path so that you may tell who is the leader and who is the follower. But if one were forced to choose one of them, I would say that the foremost among them was al-Malik al-Dilleel (the nickname of 'Imri'ul-Qays)."[29]

In his commentary, Ibn Abul-Hadid cites with asnad (authentic sources/references/transmitters) an anecdote under the above-mentioned comment. Here is what he writes the following: "During the holy month of Ramadan, it was Ali's custom to invite people to dinner. The guests were offered meat, but Ali (ع) himself abstained from eating the food which was prepared for the guests. After the dinner, Ali (ع) would address them and impart moral instruction to them. One night, as they sat for dinner, a discussion commenced about the poets of the past. After the dinner, Ali (ع), in the course of his discourse, said: "The faith is the criterion of your deeds; taqwa is your shield and protector; good manners are your adornment, and forbearance is the fortress of your honor. Then, turning to Abul-Aswad al-Du'ali, who was present there then and who had moments ago taken part in the discussion about poets, said, "Let us see, who in your opinion is the most meritorious of poets?"

Abul-Aswad recited a verse of Abu Dawud al-Ayadi, remarking that in his opinion, Abu Dawud was the greatest poet. "You are mistaken; such is not the case,"Ali (ع) told him, whereupon the guests, seeing Ali (ع) taking an interest in their discussion, pressed him to express his opinion as to whom he considered to be the best among poets. Ali (ع) said to them, "It is not right to give a judgement in this matter for, to be certain, the pursuits of the poets are not confined to a single field so that we may point out the forerunner among them. Yet, if one were forced to choose one of them, then it may be said that the best of them is one who

[29]A poetic form much popular in classical Arabic and Persian poetry. *Ghazal* is also another poetic form.

composes not according to the period's inclinations, nor out of fear and inhibition, [but he who gives free rein to his imagination and poetic inspiration]."Asked about whom this description would fit, Ali (ع) replied, "Al-Malik al-Dilleel, Imri'ul-Qays."

It is said that when someone inquired about who the most eminent poet of the Jahiliyyah (the pre-Islamic period) was, Yunus ibn Habib al-Dabbi (d. 798 A.D.), the famous grammarian, answered as follows: "The greatest of poets is Imri'ul-Qays when he mounts his steed [i.e. when he composes epic poetry motivated by the feelings of courage and bravery and the passions roused on the battlefield], al-Nabighah al-Thubyani [the genius belonging to Banu Thubyan] when he flees in fear [i.e. when he expresses himself on the psychological effects of danger and fright], al-Zuhayr ibn Abu Sulma when he takes delight [in something], and al-Asha [the one who could not see very well], when he is in a merry and joyful mood. Yunus meant to say that everyone of these poets had a special talent in his own field, one in which his works are considered as masterpieces. Each of them was foremost in his own speciality beyond which his talent and genius did not extend.

Ali's Versatility

One of the outstanding characteristics of Imam Ali's sayings, which have come down to us in the form of Nahjul-Balagha, is that such sayings are not confined to any particular field alone. Ali (ع), in his own words, has not trodden one single path only but has covered diverse grounds which occasionally are quite antithetical. Nahjul-Balagha is a masterpiece but not of the kind which excels in one single field such as the epic, the ghazal, the sermon, the praise, the satire or the love poetry. Rather, it covers multifarious fields as shall be elaborated on. In fact, works which are masterpieces in a particular field do, indeed, exist; nevertheless, their number is not great, and they are countable. The number of works which cover numerous subjects but are not masterpieces is quite large. But the characteristic that a work be simultaneously a masterpiece without restricting itself to any one particular subject is an exclusive merit of Nahjul-Balagha. With the exception of the Holy Quran, which is altogether a different subject to be dealt with independently, what masterpiece is comparable to Nahjul-Balagha's versatility?

Speech is the spirit's envoy, and the words of a man relate to the sphere in which his spirit dwells. Naturally, a speech which pertains to multiple spheres is characteristic of a spirit which is too creative to be

confined to a single sphere. Since the spirit of Ali (ع) is not limited to a particular domain but encompasses various spheres and he, in the terminology of Islamic mystics, is al-Insan al-Kamil (a perfect man), al-kawn al-jami` (the complete microcosm) and jami' kullal-hadarat[30] (the possessor of all higher virtues), so his speech is not limited to any one particular sphere. Accordingly, as we should say, in terms current nowadays, that Ali's merit lies in the multi-dimensional nature of his speech, that it is different from one-dimensional works. The all-embracing nature of Ali's spirit and his speech is not a recent discovery. It is a feature which has invoked a sense of wonder since at least one thousand years. It was this quality that had attracted the attention of Sayyid ar-Radi a thousand years ago, and he fell in love with Ali's speeches and writings. He writes saying, "Of Ali's wonderful qualities, which exclusively belong to him, none sharing them with him, is that when one reflects upon his discourses regarding abstinence (zuhd), and his exhortations concerning spiritual awareness, for a while one totally forgets that the speaker of these words was a person of the highest social and political caliber, one who ruled over vast regions during his time, and his word was an order for all. Even for a moment, the thought does not enter the reader's mind that the speaker of these words might have been inclined to anything except piety and seclusion, anything except devotion and worship, having selected a quiet corner of his house or a cave in some mountain valley where he heard no voice except his own and knew nobody except himself, being totally oblivious of the world and its hustle and bustle. It is unbelievable that those sublime discourses on asceticism, detachment and abstinence and those spiritual exhortations came from somebody who pierced the enemy's ranks and went fighting to the very heart of their forces, with a sword in his hand, poised to sever the enemy heads, and who threw many a mighty warrior down from his steed, causing him to roll into blood and dust. Blood drips from the edge of his sword and yet he is the most pious of saints and the most devoted of sages."

Sayyid ar-Radi adds saying, "Frequently, I discuss this matter with friends, and it equally invokes their sense of wonder."

Shaikh Muhammad `Abdo, too, was profoundly moved by this aspect of Nahjul-Balagha, and it made him marvel at its swiftly changing

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[30]Imri'ul-Qays (500-540 AD) is the famous poet of the pre-Islamic era (*Jahiliyyah*), the author of the first *Muallaqat;* Al-Malik al-Dillili is his nickname.

scenes which take the reader on a journey through different worlds. He makes a note of it in the Introduction to his commentary of Nahjul-Balagha.

Aside from his speech, in general, Ali (ع) had a spirit that was universal, all-embracing, and multi-dimensional, and he has always been eulogized for this quality. He is a just ruler, a devotee who remains awake all night long worshipping Allah; he weeps in the niche of prayer (mihrab) and smiles on the battlefield. He is a tough warrior and a soft-hearted and kind guardian. He is a philosopher of profound insight and an able general. He is a teacher, a preacher, a judge, a jurist, a peasant and a writer. He is a perfect man whose great soul envelops all spheres of the human spirit.

> Safi al-Din al-Hilli (1277-1349 A.D.) says the following about him:
> Opposites have come together in thy attributes,
> And for that thou has no rivals.
> A devout, a ruler, a man of forbearance, and a courageous one,
> A lethal warrior, an ascetic, a pauper yet generous to others,
> Traits which never gathered in one man and the like of which none ever possessed;
> A gentleness and charm to abash the morning breeze,
> A valor and might to melt sturdy rocks;
> Poetry cannot describe the glory of thy soul,
> Your multi-faceted personality is above the comprehension of all critics.

Apart from what has been said, an interesting point is that in spite of the fact that Ali's discourses are about spiritual and moral issues, in them his literary charm and eloquence have attained their peak. Ali (ع) has not dealt with popular poetic themes such as love, wine and vainglory, which are fertile subjects for literary expression in prose and poetry. Moreover, he did not aim at displaying his skills in the are of oratory. Speech for him was a means and not an end in itself. Neither did he intend to create an object of are nor did he wish to be known as an author of a literary masterpiece. Above all, his words have a universality which transcends the limits of time and place. His addressee is the human being within every person; accordingly, his message does not know any frontier although, generally, time and place impose limits on the outlook of a speaker and confine his personality.

The main aspect of the miraculous nature of the Quran is that its subjects and themes are altogether at variance with those current during the time of its revelation. It marks the beginning of a new era in literature and deals with another world and a different sphere. The beauty and charm of its style and its literary excellence are truly miraculous. In these aspects, too, as is the case with its other features, Nahjul-Balagha comes closer to the Quran. In truth, it is the offspring of the Holy Quran.

Themes of Nahjul-Balagha

The variety of topics and themes discussed in Nahjul-Balagha unfolds a wide spectrum of problems that give color and hue to these heavenly discourses. The author of this dissertation has no pretension to possess the ability to do the book full justice and analyze it in depth. I just intend to give a brief account of the variety of its themes, and it is my firm belief that others will come in the future who shall be able to do justice to this masterpiece of human power of speech.

A Glance at the Varied Problems Covered by Nahjul-Balagha

The various topics covered in Nahjul-Balagha, everyone of which is worthy of discussion, may be outlined as follows:

- Theological and metaphysical issues;
- Mystic path and worship;
- Government and social justice;
- Ahl al-Bayt (ع) and the issue of caliphate;
- Wisdom and admonition; the world and worldliness;
- Heroism and bravery
- Predictions, predictions, and eschatology;
- Prayers and invocations;
- Critiques of the contemporary society;
- Social philosophy;
- Islam and the Quran;
- Morality and self-discipline;
- Personalities... and a host of other topics.

Obviously, as the titles of the various chapters of the present book indicate, the writer of this Introduction does not make any claim that the topics cited above are all that can be found in Nahjul-Balagha. Neither does he claim that he has done an exhaustive study of these topics, nor

has he any pretension to being considered competent for undertaking such a task. That which is offered in these chapters is no more than a glimpse. Perhaps, in the future, with Divine assistance, after deriving a greater benefit from this inexhaustible treasure, the writer may be able to undertake a more comprehensive study. Or perhaps others may be blessed with the opportunity to accomplish such an undertaking. Allah is wise and, indeed, His assistance and help is the best.

Part Two

Theology and Metaphysics of Nahjul-Balagha

One of the basic issues dealt with in Nahjul-Balagha relates to theological and metaphysical problems. All in all, there are about forty places where the sermons, letters, and aphorisms discuss these issues. Some of these pertain to the aphorisms, but more often the discussion is longer, covering sometimes several pages.

The passages on Tawhid (Divine Unity) in Nahjul-Balagha can perhaps be considered to be the most wonderful discussions of the book. Without any exaggeration, when we take into account the conditions in which they were delivered, they can almost be said to be miraculous.

The discussions of this theme in Nahjul-Balagha are of a varied nature. Some of them constitute studies of the scheme of creation bearing witness to Divine creativity and wisdom. Here, Ali (ع) speaks about the whole system of the heavens and the earth, or occasionally discusses the wonderful features of some specific creature like the bat, the peacock or the ant, and the role of the Divine design and purpose in their creation. To give an example of this kind of discussion, we may quote a passage regarding the ant:

Have you observed the tiny creatures that He has created? How He has made them strong and perfected their constitution and shaped their organs of hearing and sight, and how He has styled their bones and skin? Observe the ant with its tiny body and delicate form. It is so small that its features can hardly be discerned by the eye and so insignificant that it does not enter our thoughts. See how it roams about upon the ground and arduously collects its livelihood. It carries the grain to its hole and deposits it in its store. It collects during the summer for the winter and, when winter arrives, it foresees the time to reemerge. Its livelihood is guaranteed and designed according to its built. The Benefactor and the Provider does not forget or forsake it. He does not deprive it, even though it should be in hard and dry stones and rocks. You will be amazed at the delicate intricacy of its wonderful constitution if you investigate the structure of its alimentary canals, its belly, and its eyes and ears which are in its head. (Sermon 185)

However, most of the discussions about Tawhid in Nahjul-Balagha are rational and philosophical. The rare sublimity of Nahjul-

Balagha becomes manifest in these discourses. In these philosophical and rational discourses of Nahjul-Balagha on Tawhid, what constitutes the focus of all arguments is the infinite, absolute and self-sufficing nature of the Divine Essence. In these passages, Ali (ع) attains the heights of eloquence, and none, neither before him nor after him, has come close to him in this aspect.

Another issue dealt with is that of the absolute simplicity (al-basatat al-mutlaqa) of the Divine Essence and negation of every kind of multiplicity, divisibility in the Godhead and refutation of separability of the Divine Attributes from the Divine Essence. This theme occurs repeatedly in Nahjul-Balagha.

Also discussed is a series of other profound problems which had never been touched before him. They are: "Allah being the First while also being the Last; His being simultaneously the Manifest and the Hidden; His precedence over time and number, i.e. His pre-eternity is not temporal and His Unity is not numerical; His Supremacy, Authority, and Self-sufficiency; His Creativeness; that attendance to one affair does not prevent Him from attending to other affairs; the identity of Divine Word and Act, the limited capacity of human reason to comprehend His reality, that gnosis (ma'rifa) is a kind of manifestation

(tajalli) of Him upon the intellects, which is different from mental conception or cognition, the negation of such categories and qualities such as corporeality, motion, rest, change, place, time, similitude, antithesis, partnership, possession of organs or parts, limitation and number, and a series of other issues which we shall, by the will of Allah, mention later and give examples of everyone of them. Even a thinker who is well-versed in the beliefs and views of ancient and modern philosophers would be struck with wonder upon seeing the wide range and scope of the problems propounded in this wonderful book.

An elaborate discussion of the issues raised and dealt with in Nahjul-Balagha would itself require a voluminous book and cannot be covered in one or two articles. Unavoidably, we shall be brief; but before we commence our brief survey, we are compelled to mention certain points as an introduction to our discussion.

A Bitter Reality

We, Shia Muslims, must admit that we have been unjust with regard to our duty to the man whom we, more than others, take pride in following or, at the very least, we must admit falling short in our duty towards him. In substance, any kind of failure in fulfilling our responsibility is an act of injustice on our own part. We did not want to realize the significance of Ali (ع), or we had been unable to do so. All our energy and labor have been devoted to proclaiming the Prophet's statements about Ali (ع) and to denouncing those who ignored them, but we failed to pay attention to the intellectual side of Imam Ali's personality.

Sadi, the poet, says the following:
The reality of musk lies in its scent,
Not in the perfumer's advice.

Applying Sadi's words to our attitude regarding Imam Ali's personality, we did not realize that this musk, recommended by the Divine Perfumer, itself carried its own pleasant aroma and, before everything else, we should have tried to know its scent and become familiar with it. That is, we should have familiarized ourselves and others with its inner fragrance. The counsel of the Divine Perfumer was meant to acquaint the people with its pleasant redolence, not for the purpose that they may believe that it is musk then devote all their energies to convince others by arguing with them, without bothering to acquaint themselves with its real fragrance.

Had Nahjul-Balagha belonged to some other people, would they have treated it the way we treated this great book? the country of Iran is the center of Shiism and the language of its people is Persian. You have only to examine the translations and commentaries on Nahjul-Balagha to make a judgement about what our accomplishments amounts to.

To take a more general case, the Shii sources of hadith (tradition) and the texts of dua' (supplications) are incomparable with the texts of non-Shii works in the same field. This is also true of Divine teachings and other subjects. The problems and issues discussed in works like al-Kulayni's Al-Kafi, or Shaikh al-Saduq's Al-Tawhid, or al-Ihtijaj of al-Tibrisi are nowhere to be found among the works of non-Shiis. It can be said that if occasionally similar issues are dealt with in non-Shii books, the material is unmistakably spurious, for it is not only opposed to the

prophetic teachings but also contradicts the Quranic principles. There is a strong smell of anthropomorphism which hangs around them. Recently, Hashim Ma'ruf al-Hassani, in his book Dirasat fi Al-Kafi lil-Kulayni wal-Sahih li Bukhari, which is an original but a brief comparative study of the Sahah of al-Bukhari and of al-Kulayni's Al-Kafi, has dealt with the traditions related to the problems of theology.

Shii Rationalism

The discussion of theological problems and their analysis by the Shi'i Imams, of which Nahjul-Balagha is the earliest example, was the main cause of the emergence of rationalistic approach and philosophic outlook in the Shi`i intellectual world since Islam's earliest days. This cannot be labelled as an innovation (bida) in Islam; rather, its basis was laid down by the Quran itself. It was in accordance with the approach of the Quran and for the purpose of its interpretation that the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) expounded such issues. If anybody can be reproached in this matter, it is those who did not adopt this method and abandoned the means to follow it.

History shows that from the earliest Islamic era, the Shia, more than any other sect, were interested in these problems. Among Ahl al-Sunna, the Mutazilites, who were nearer to the Shia, did possess similar inclinations. But, as we know, the general view predominant among Ahl al-Sunna did not welcome it and, as a result, the Mutazilite sect became extinct about the end of the 3rd Hijri/9th A.D. century.

Ahmed Amin, the Egyptian writer, confirms this view in the first Volume of his Zuhur al-Islam. Having discussed the philosophic movement in Egypt during the reign of the Fatimids, who were followers of a Shia sect, he writes the following: "Philosophy is more akin to Shiism than it is to Sunni Islam, and we witness the truth of this in the era of the Fatimide rule [in Egypt] and in that of the Buwayhids [in Iran]. Even during the later centuries Persia, a Shiite country, has paid more attention to philosophy than any other Islamic country. In our own times, Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Asadabadi, who had Shiite inclinations and had studied philosophy in Iran, created a philosophic movement in Egypt when he arrived here.

Curiously, Ahmed Amin, in his explanation of why the Shia showed more inclination towards philosophy, commits an error, willfully or otherwise. According to him, "The reason for greater inclination on the

part of the Shia towards rational and philosophical discussions is to be found in their esotericism and their flair for tawil.[31] They were compelled to seek the assistance of philosophy for defense of their esotericism. That is why the Fatimide Egypt and Buwayhid Iran, and Iran during the Safawid and Qajar (Czarist) periods, were more disposed towards philosophy than the rest of the Islamic world."

This is sheer nonsense on the part of Ahmed Amin. It was the Imams of the Shia School of Yought who, for the first time, introduced the philosophical approach, and it was they who introduced the most profound and intricate concepts with regard to theological problems in their arguments, polemics, sermons, ahdith and prayers, of which Nahjul-Balagha is one example. Even with regard to the prophetic traditions, the Shia sources are far more sublime and profound than the traditions contained in the non-Shii sources. This characteristic is not confined to philosophy alone but is also true of kalam, fiqh, and usul al-fiqh, in which the Shia enjoy a status of distinction. All this owes its origin to one and the same source: emphasis on rationalism.

Some others have tried to trace the origin of this difference [between the Shii and the Sunni mind-sets] in the concept of Athe Shiite nation. According to them, since the Persians are Shiite and the Shia are Persian and, since the Persians are a people with a philosophical temperament, fond of the intricacies of speculation and pure thought, with the help of their rich and strong philosophical tradition, they succeeded in raising the level of Shia thought, giving it an Islamic hue.

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[31]The term *tawil* has been defined in various different ways. Generally speaking, when used in the opposition to *tafsir* (which is applied to the explanation of the literal and explicit meanings of the Quranic texts), it is applied to the interpretation of the Quranic verses which goes beyond their literal meaning. According to Imamiyya Shia, no one except the Prophet (ص) and the twelve Imams is entitled to draw *tawil* of the Quranic verses. To illustrate what is meant by *ta'wil,* consider these examples: (1) According to Shī`a *ahadith*, verse 2: 158, AWhere ever you maybe, Allah will bring you all together, pertains to the 313 companions of Imam al-Mahdi (ع) whom Allah will gather in a certain place [around the Kaba] from various parts of the earth in a single night. (2) According to another *hadith,* verse 67: 30, "Say: What think you? If your water (in the wells) should have vanished into the earth, who would then bring you running water?" pertains to the *ghayba* (occultation) of Imam al-Mahdi (ع). Such interpretations, which obviously go beyond the apparent meaning of the Quranic verses, are called *ta'wil.*

Bertrand Russell, in A History of Western Philosophy, expresses a similar view based on the above-mentioned argument. With his habitual or inherent impoliteness, he puts forth this opinion. However, Russell lacks the capacity of vindicating his claim, since he was totally unfamiliar with Islamic philosophy and basically knew nothing about it. He was not qualified to express any informed opinion about the origins of the Shia thought and its sources.

Our rejoinder to the upholders of this view is: First of all, not all Shias were/are Persian, nor all Persians were Shia. Were not Muhammad ibn Yaqub al-Kulayni, Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Babawayh al- Qummi and Muhammad ibn Ab Talib al-Mazandarani Persian?! Were not Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud al-Sijistani and Muslim ibn Hajjaj al-Nishaburi Persian, too?! Was not Sayyid ar-Radi, the compiler of Nahjul-Balagha, of a Persian origin?! Were not the Fatimids of Egypt of Persian descent?

Why was philosophical thought revived in Egypt with the inception of the Fatimide rule, and why did it decline with their fall? And why was it revived later, after a long interval, only through the influence of an Iranian Shia?

The truth is that the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) were the only real dynamic force behind this trend of thinking and this kind of approach. All scholars of Ahl al-Sunna admit that among the Prophet's Companions only Ali (ع) was a man of philosophic wisdom, the man who had an altogether distinct rational approach. Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna) is quoted as having thus remarked: "Ali's status among the companions of Muhammad (ص) was that of the 'rational' in the midst of the 'corporeal'."

Obviously, the intellectual approach of the followers of an Imam such as Ali (ع) should be expected to be radically different from that of those who followed others. Moreover, Ahmed Amin and others have been susceptible to another similar misunderstanding. They express doubts with regard to the authenticity of ascription of such philosophic statements [as exist in Nahjul-Balagha] to Ali (ع). They say that the Arabs were not familiar with such issues, arguments and elaborate analyses like the ones found in Nahjul-Balagha prior to becoming acquainted with the Greek philosophy, and evidently, according to them, these discourses should have been composed by some later scholars

familiar with the Greek philosophy then were attributed to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

We also accept that the Arabs were not familiar with such ideas and notions. Not only the Arabs, the non-Arabs, too, were not acquainted with them, nor were those notions familiar to the Greeks and Greek philosophy. Ahmed Amin first brings down Ali (ع) to the level of such Arabs like Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan, then he postulates his minor and major premises, building his conclusion on their premises: "The Arabs were unfamiliar with philosophical notions; Ali (ع) was an Arab; therefore, Ali (ع) was also unfamiliar with such philosophical notions. One should ask him whether the Arabs of the Jahiliyya were familiar with the ideas and the concepts propounded in the Holy Quran. Had not Ali (ع) been brought up and trained by the Messenger of Allah himself? Did not the Prophet (ص) introduce Ali (ع) to his companions as the most learned and knowledgeable among them? Why should we deny the high spiritual status of someone who enriched his inner self by drawing on the bounteous wealth of Islam in order to protect the prestige of some of the Prophet's companions who could never rise above the ordinary level?

Ahmed Amin says that prior to being acquainted with the Greek philosophy, the people of Arabia were not familiar with the ideas and concepts found in Nahjul-Balagha. The answer to this is that the Arabs did not become acquainted with the ideas and notions propounded in Nahjul-Balagha even after centuries of familiarity with the Greek philosophy. Not only the Arabs, even the non-Arab Muslims, were not acquainted with these ideas for the simple reason that there is no trace of them whatsoever in the Greek philosophy itself! These ideas are exclusively specific to the Islamic philosophy. Muslim philosophers gradually picked these ideas up from the basic Islamic sources, incorporating them in their thought under the guidance of revelation.

Philosophical Notions Concerning Metaphysics

As stated above, Nahjul-Balagha adopts two kinds of approach to the problems of theology. The first kind of approach calls attention to the sensible world and its phenomena as a mirror reflecting the Knowledge and Perfection of the Creator. The second approach involves purely rationalistic and philosophical reflections. The latter approach accounts for the greater part of the theological discussions of Nahjul-Balagha.

Moreover, it is the only approach adopted with regard to the discussion of the Divine Essence and Attributes.

As we know, the value of such discussions and the legitimacy of such reflections have always been questioned by those who consider them improper from the viewpoint of reason or canon, or both. In our own times, a certain group claims that this kind of analysis and inference does not agree with the spirit of Islam and that the Muslims were initiated into such kind of speculations under the influence of the Greek philosophy and not as a result of any inspiration or guidance effused from the Quran. They say that had the Muslims adhered closely to the Quranic teachings, they would not have entangled themselves with these tortuous webs. For the same reason, they view with suspicion the authenticity of such speculations found in Nahjul-Balagha and their attribution to Imam Ali (ع).

During the second and third centuries, a group of people opposed such kind of discussions, questioning their legitimacy and raising doctrinal objections thereto. They insisted that it is obligatory on Muslims to be satisfied with the literal and commonly understood meaning of the words of the Quran. They regarded every kind of inquiry into the meaning of the Quran as an innovation (bid`a) in religion. For instance, if someone inquired about the meaning of the Quranic verse "The all-Compassionate seated Himself upon the Throne"(Quran, 20: 5), he was confronted by the displeasure of those who regarded such questions as not only improper but distasteful. He would be told: "The exact meaning is unknown and questioning is heresy."[32]

During the 3rd A.H./9th A.D. century, this group, which later came to be called Asharite, overwhelmed the Mutazilites who considered such speculations to be within the bounds of legitimacy. This victory of the Ash`arites delivered a severe blow to the intellectual life of Islam. The Akhbaris, who followed a Shii school which flourished during the period between the 10th A.H./16th A.D. And the 14th A.H./20th A.D. centuries, particularly during the 10th A.H./16th A.D. And 11th A.H./17th A.D. centuries, followed the Asha`ris in their ideologies and convictions. They raised doctrinal objections against ratiocination. Now we shall proceed to discuss the objections raised from a rationalist point of view.

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[32] *Allama* S.M.H Tabatabai, *Usul e falsafah wa rawish e riyalism* (The Principles and Method of Philosophy of Realism), Introduction to Vol. 1.

As a result of the triumph of the empirical and experimental method over the deductive approach in Europe, especially in the physical sciences, the view began to prevail that rational speculation was unreliable not only in the physical sciences but also in all scientific disciplines and that the only reliable method was that of empirical philosophy. The result was that the problems of theology were viewed with doubt and suspicion because they lay beyond the domain of experimental and empirical observation.

The past victories of the Asharites, on one hand, and the amazing triumphs of the empirical method, which followed one another in quick succession, on the other hand, drove some non-Shiite Muslim writers to the extremes of excitement. The outcome was the eclectic opinion that from the religious (Shari) as well as the rational point of view, the use of the deductive method even in problems of theology should be discarded. From the Shari viewpoint, they made the claim that according to the outlook of the Quran, the only valid theological approach was the empirical and experimental method and the study of the natural phenomena and the system of creation; the rest, they declared, is no more than an exercise in futility. They pointed out that in scores of its verses, the Quran in most unequivocal terms has invited mankind to study the phenomena of nature; it considers the keys to the secrets of the origin and the workings of the universe to be concealed within nature itself. In this way, they echoed, in their writings and speeches, the ideas expressed by the European proponents of empirical philosophy.

In Farid al-Wajdi's book Ala atlal al-madhhab al-maddi (On the Ruins of Materialism), and in Sayyid Abul-Hassan al-Nadawi's Matha khasira al-alam bi-inhitat al-Muslimin ("What the World Lost Through the Decline of Muslims"), as well as the writers belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) such as Sayyid Qutb and others, have all supported this view, vehemently attacking the opposite viewpoint.

Al-Nadawi, in his above-mentioned book, says the following: "The prophets informed men about the existence of Allah and His Attributes and acquainted them with the origin and the beginning of life on the planet as well as the ultimate destiny of man, putting this free information at their disposal. They relieved mankind of the need to understand and discuss these problems the basics of which lie beyond our reach (because these problems belong to the sphere of the supra-sensible, and our knowledge and experience is limited to the physical and the sensible, the tangible). But men did not value this blessing; therefore, they

entangled themselves in debates and speculations about these problems, striding into the dark regions of the hidden and the unknowable.[33]

The same author, in another chapter of the same book, where he discusses the causes of the decline of Muslims, under the heading AThe Neglect of Useful Sciences, criticizes the Muslim Ulema' in these words: "The Muslim scholars and thinkers did not give as much importance to practical and experimental sciences as they gave to debating about metaphysics, which they had learned from the Greek philosophy. The Greek metaphysics and theology is nothing more than the Greeks' polytheistic mythology presented in a philosophical outfit and is no more than a series of meaningless conjectures expressed in an absurd jargon. Allah has exempted the Muslims from such a debate, speculation and analysis regarding these matters which are not much different from the analytic pursuits of the Alchemists. But out of ingratitude for this great blessing, the Muslims wasted their energy and genius in problems of this sort.[34]

Without any doubt, the views of the likes of Farid al-Wajdi and of al-Nadawi should be regarded as a sort of return to Asharism, though dressed in contemporary style akin to the language of empirical philosophy.

Here, we cannot enter into a philosophical discussion about the value of philosophic reflection. In the chapters titled A The Value of Information and The Origin of Multiplicity in Perception in the book titled The Principles and Method of Realism, we have discussed the matter in sufficient details. Here, we shall confine ourselves to the Quranic aspect of this problem and investigate whether the Holy Quran considers the study of nature to be the only valid method of inquiry into theological problems, or whether it allows for another approach besides the one mentioned above.

However, it is essential to point out that the disagreement between the Asharites and the non-Asharites is not about the legitimacy of the use of the Book and the Sunnah as sources in the problems of theology; rather, the disagreement concerns the manner of their

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[33]Muhammad Sulayman Nadawi, *Matha khasara al-alam bi inhitat al-Muslimin,* Vol. 4, p. 97.

[34]*Ibid.* p. 135.

utilization. According to the Asharites, their application should not exceed mute acceptance. According to them, we assign the various Attributes like Unity, Omniscience, Omnipotence and the rest to Allah because they have been ascribed to Him by the Sharia; otherwise, we would not know whether or not Allah is as such because the basic principles and essentials dealing with Allah are beyond our reach. Therefore, according to them, we are forced to accept Allah as such, but we cannot know or understand that Allah is as such. The role of the religious texts is that they prescribe for us the way we ought to think and believe so that we may follow it in our ideology and convictions.

According to the contestants of this view, these issues, as is the case with any other rational concept or idea, are amenable to human understanding, that is, there exist certain principles and essentials which, if properly known, enable man to understand them. The role of the religious texts lies in their capacity to inspire, motivate, and guide the human intellect by putting understandable principles and essentials at its disposal. Basically, servitude in intellectual matters is absurd. It is like ordering one to think in a certain fashion, and asking him to derive certain prescribed conclusions. It is like ordering someone to see a thing in a certain fashion then asking him the following: "How do you see it? Is it big or small? Is it black or white?! Servitude in thinking does not mean anything other than absence of thinking and acceptance without reflection.

In short, the question is not whether it is possible for man to go beyond the teachings of the Revelation. Allah be our refuge, there is nothing that lies beyond them because that which has reached us through Revelation and through the Household of Revelation (i.e. Ahl al-Bayt [ع]) is the utmost limit of perfection concerning the knowledge of the Divine. Here, our debate centers upon the capacity of the human thought and reason, whether or not it can, when supplied with the basic principles and essentials, undertake an intellectual journey through the world of theological problems[35] or not.

As to the invitation of the Quran to study and inquire about the phenomena of creation and its emphasis on nature as a means for attaining the knowledge of Allah and the super-natural, it should be said that it is, indubitably, a basic principle of the Qur'anic teachings. It is with extraordinary insistence that the Holy Quran asks the human beings to

[35] `*Allama* Tabatabai, *Op. Cit*.

inquire into the nature of the earth, the sky, the plants and animals, and man himself, urging them to study them scientifically. It is also indubitable that the Muslims did not take enough worthy strides in this direction. Perhaps the real reason behind it was the Greek philosophy, which was deductive and based on pure speculation. They used this approach even in the field of the physical sciences. Nevertheless, as the history of science bears testimony, the Muslim scientists did not altogether abandon the experimental method in their studies as did the Greeks. The Muslims, not the Europeans, as is commonly thought, were the pioneers of the experimental method. The Europeans followed on the tracks first laid by the Muslims.

The Value of Studying the Natural Phenomena

Aside from all of this, the question worthy of consideration is whether the Quran, besides its emphasis on the study of the creating of earth, water and air, allows other ways of approaching the issue, or if it closes all other doors. The question is whether the Quran, even as it invites people to study the signs of Allah (ayat), also welcomes other modes of intellectual endeavor. Basically, what is the value of inquiry into the works of creation (an inquiry which the Quran urges us, explicitly or implicitly, to undertake), from the viewpoint of initiating us into the awareness and consciousness which this heavenly Book aims to cultivate?

The truth is that the measure of assistance provided by the study of the works of the creation in understanding the problems explicitly pointed out by the Holy Quran is quite restricted. The Holy Quran has propounded certain problems of theology which are by no means understandable through the study of the created world or nature. The value of study of the system of creation is limited only to the extent to which it proves that the world is governed by a Power which knows, designs, plans, and administers it. The world is a mirror, open to empirical experiment, only to the extent that it points towards something that lies beyond nature and discloses the existence of a Mighty Hand which runs nature's cosmic wheels.

But the Holy Quran is not content that man should only know that a Mighty, Knowing, and Wise Power administers this universe. This may perhaps be true of other heavenly scriptures, but is by no means true of the Holy Quran, which is the final and ultimate heavenly message and has a great deal to say about Allah and the reality transcending nature.

Purely Rationalistic Problems

The most basic problem to which the mere study of the world of creation fails to provide an answer is the necessity of existence and uncreated nature of the Power which transcends natural phenomena. The world is a mirror in the sense that it indicates the existence of a Mighty Hand and a Wise Power, but it does not tell us anything more about Its nature. It does not tell us whether that Power is subservient to something else or not, or if it is self-subsisting. And if it is subject to something else, what is that? the objective of the Holy Quran is not only that we should know that a Mighty Hand administers the world, but that we may know that that Administrator is Allah and that Allah is the indefinable: "There is nothing like Him, the One whose Essence encompasses all perfection or, in other words, that Allah signifies Absolute Perfection and is the referent of "His is the loftiest likeness." How can the study of nature give us an understanding of such notions and concepts? The second problem is that of the Unity of Allah (Tawhid). The Holy Quran has stated this issue in a logical form and used a syllogistic argument to explain it. The method of argument which it has employed in this regard is called "exclusive syllogism"or burhan al-tamannu`. Occasionally, it eliminates the possibility of multiplicity in the efficient cause as in the following verse[36]: "If there had been (multiple) gods in them (i.e. in the earth and the heavens) other than Allah, they would surely go to ruin"(21: 22).

At other times, it argues by eliminating the possibility of multiplicity in the final cause: "Allah has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god besides Him, for then each god would have taken off that he created and some of them would have risen up over others"(23: 91).

The Holy Quran never suggests that the study of the system of creation can lead us to the knowledge of the Unity of the Godhead so as to imply that the essential knowledge of the transcendental Creator be considered attainable from that source. Moreover, such a suggestion would not have been correct.
The Holy Quran alludes to various problems as indicated by the following examples:

Nothing is like Him. (42: 11)
And Allah`s is the loftiest likeness. (16: 60)

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[36] *Ibid*. Vol. 5.

To Him belong the most Beautiful Names. (20: 8)
And His is the loftiest likeness in the heavens and the earth. (30: 27)
He is Allah, there is no god but He. He is the King, the All-holy, the All-peaceable, the All-faithful, the All-preserver, the Almighty, the All-compeller, the All-sublime. (59: 23)
And to Allah belong the East and the West; whither so ever you turn, there is the Face of Allah. (2: 115)
And He is Allah in the heavens and the earth; He knows your secrets, and what you publish. (6: 3)
He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward; He has knowledge of everything. (57: 3)
He is the Living, the Everlasting. (2: 255)
Allah, is the Everlasting, [Who] has not begotten, and has not been begotten and equal to Him is not any one. (112: 2-4)

Why does the Holy Qur'an raise such issues? Is it for the sake of propounding mysterious matters incomprehensible to man who, according to al-Nadawi, lacks the knowledge of its essential principles, then asking him to accept them without comprehending their meaning? Or does the Holy Quran actually want him to know Allah through the attributes and descriptions that have come in it? And, if this is true, what reliable approach does it recommend? How is it possible to acquire this knowledge through the study of the natural phenomena? the study of the creation teaches us that Allah has knowledge of all things; that is, all things that He has made were created knowingly and wisely. But the Holy Quran expects us not only to know this but also stresses that:

Indeed,Allah has the knowledge of everything. (2: 231)
And not so much as the weight of an atom in earth or heaven escapes from your Lord, neither is aught smaller than that, or greater, but in a Manifest Book. (10: 61)
Say: If the sea were ink for the Words of my Master, the sea would be spent before the Words of my Master are spent, though We brought replenishment the like of it. (18: 109)

This means that Allah's knowledge is infinite and so is His power. How and wherefore is it possible through perception and observation of the world of creation to reach the conclusion that the Creators Knowledge and Power are infinite? the Holy Quran, similarly, propounds numerous other problems of the kind. For instance, it mentions al-lawh al-mahfuz (the Protected Tablet), lawh al-mahw wa al-ithbat (The Tablet of Expunction and Affirmation), jabr and ikhtiyar (determinism and free will), wahi (revelation) and ilham (intuition), etc.; none of which

are susceptible to inquiry through the empirical study of the world of creation.

It must be admitted that the Holy Quran, definitely, has raised these problems in the form of a series of lessons and has emphasized their importance through advice and exhortation. The following verses of the Holy Quran may be quoted in this regard:

What?! Do they not meditate on the Qur'an? Or is it that there are locks upon their hearts? (47: 24)
(This is) a Scripture that We have revealed unto thee, full of blessing, that they may ponder on its revelations, and that men of understanding may reflect. (38: 29)

Inevitably, we are forced to accept that the Holy Quran assumes the existence of a reliable method for understanding the meaning of these facts which have not been revealed as a series of obscure incomprehensible things out of the reach of the human intellect.
The scope of problems propounded by the Holy Qur'an in the sphere of metaphysics is far greater than what can be resolved or answered through the study of physical creation. This is the reason why the Muslims have pursued these problems, at times through spiritual and gnostic efforts, and at other times through speculative and rational approach.

I wonder whether those who claim that the Holy Quran considers the study of nature as the sole, sufficient means for the solution of metaphysical problems, can give a satisfactory answer with regard to the various problems propounded by it, a characteristic which is specifically relevant to this great heavenly Book.

Ali's sole source of inspiration in his exposition of the problems mentioned in the previous chapters is the Holy Quran, and the sole motive behind his discourses is exegetical. Perhaps, had it not been for Ali (ع), the rationalistic and speculative aspects of the Holy Quran would have forever remained without an interpretation.

After these brief introductory remarks on the value of these issues, we shall go on to cite some relevant examples from Nahjul-Balagha.

The Divine Essence and Attributes

In this section, we shall cite some examples of Nahjul-Balagha's treatment of the problems of theology relevant to the Divine Essence and Attributes. Later, we shall make a brief comparative study of the issue in various schools then conclude our discussion on this aspect of Nahjul-Balagha.

However, before proceeding further, I solicit the reader`s pardon on account of the discussion in the last three sections becoming a bit technical and philosophical, something which is not very welcome for those who are not used to it. But what is the remedy? Discussing a book such as Nahjul-Balagha does entail such ups and downs. For this reason, we shall limit ourselves to giving only a few examples from the book on this subject and refrain from any elaborate discussion. This is so because if we were to comment on every sentence in Nahjul-Balagha, the result will be, as is said,

My Mathnawi requires seventy mounds of paper.

The Divine Essence

Does Nahjul-Balagha have anything to say about the Divine Essence and how to define it? The answer is: Yes, and a lot. However, much of the discussion revolves around the point that the Divine Essence is the Absolute and Infinite Being, without a quiddity. His Essence accepts neither limits nor boundaries, as is the case with other beings, static or changeable, which are limited and finite. A changeable being is one which constantly transcends its former limits and assumes new ones. But such is not the Divine Essence. Quiddity, which may qualify and confine Him within limits of finitude, is not applicable to Him. None of the aspects of beings are devoid of His Presence, and no kind of imperfection is applicable to Him except the absence of any imperfection whatsoever: The only thing "missing"in Him is absence of defect or inadequacy of any kind. The sole kind of negation applicable to Him is the negation of all negations. The only kind of non-being attributable to Him is the negation of any kind of imperfection in relation to Him. He is free from all shades of non-being which characterize creatures and effects. He is free from finitude, multiplicity, divisibility and need. The only territory that He does not enter is that of nothingness and non-existence. He is with everything, but not in anything, and nothing is with Him. He is not within things, though not out of them. He is over and

above every kind of condition, state, similarity and likeness. This is so because these qualities relate to limited, and they determinate beings characterized by quiddity:

"He is with everything but not in the sense of [physical] nearness. He is different from everything but not in the sense of separation"(Sermon 1).

"He is not inside things in the sense of physical [pervasion or] penetration and is not outside them in the sense of [physical] exclusion [for exclusion entails a kind of finitude]."(Sermon 186)

"He is distinct from things because He overpowers them, and the things are distinct from Him because of their subjection to Him."(Sermon 152)

That is to say, His distinctness from things lies in the fact that He has authority and control over them, all of them. However, His power, authority and sovereignty, unlike those of the creatures, are not accompanied with simultaneous weakness, subjugation and subjection. His distinction and separateness from things lie in the fact that things are totally subject to His power and authority, and that which is subject and subordinate can never be like the one who subjugates and commands control over it. His separateness from things does not lie in physical separation but is on account of the distinction which lies between the Provider and the provided, the Perfect and the imperfect, the Powerful and the weak.

These kinds of ideas are replete in Ali's discourses. All the problems which shall be discussed later are based on the principle that the Divine Essence is Absolute and Infinite, and the concepts of limit, form and condition do not apply to it.

Divine Unity : Ontological, not a Numerical Concept

Another feature of Tawhid (monotheism) as propounded by Nahjul-Balagha is that the Divine Unity is not numerical but is something else. Numerical unity means the oneness of something which has the possibility of recurrence or multiplicity. It is always possible to imagine that the quiddity and form of an existent is realizable in another individual being. In such cases, the unity of an individual possessing that quiddity is numerical oneness and stands as the antithesis of duplicity or multiplicity.

It is one means that there is unique, none, nobody, nothing is like it. Inevitably, this kind of unity entails the quality of being restricted in number, which is a defect because one is less in number as compared to two or more of its kind. But if a being is such that the assumption of a recurrence with regard to it is impossible, since it is infinite and unlimited, and if we assume another like it exists, it will follow that it is the same as the first being, or that it is something which is not similar to it and, therefore, it cannot be called a second instance of it. In such a case, unity is not numerical. That is, this kind of unity is not one opposed to duplicity or multiplicity. And when it is said, "It is one, it does not mean that there are no two, three or more of its kind, but it means that a second to it is inconceivable."

This notion can further be clarified through an example. We know that the astronomers and physicists are not in agreement about the dimensions of the universe, whether it is limited in size or infinite. Some scientists have favored the idea of an unlimited and infinite universe; others claim that the universe is limited in dimensions so that if we travel in any direction, we shall reach a point beyond which there is no space. The other issue is whether the universe in which we live is the only universe in existence, or if there are other universes existing besides it.

Evidently, the assumption of another physical world beyond our own is a corollary to the assumption that our universe is not infinite. Only in this case is it possible to assume the existence of, say, two physical universes each of which is limited and has finite dimensions. But if we assume that our universe is infinite, it is not possible to entertain the assumption of another universe existing beyond it. Whatever we were to assume would be identical with this universe or a part of it.

The assumption of another being similar to the Being of the One God, such as the assumption of another physical universe besides an infinite material universe, amounts to assuming the impossible, for the Being of Allah is absolute: "Absolute Selfhood and Absolute Reality."

The notion that the Divine Unity is not a numerical concept, and that qualifying it by a number is synonymous with imposing limits on the Divine Essence, is repeatedly discussed by Nahjul-Balagha:

"He is the One, but not in a numerical sense."(Sermon 152)

"He is not confined by limits, nor is He counted by numbers."(Sermon 186)

"He who points to Him admits for Him limitations, and he who admits limitations for Him has numbered Him."(Sermon 1)

"He who qualifies Him limits Him. He who limits Him numbers Him. He who numbers Him denies His pre-eternity."(Sermon 152)

"Everything associated with unity is deficient except Him."(Sermon 65)

How beautiful, profound, and full of meaning is the last statement! It says that everything except the Divine Essence is limited if it is one. That is, everything for which another of its same kind is conceivable is a limited being and an addition of another individual would increase its number. But this is not true of the Unity of the Divine Essence, for Allah`s Unity lies in His greatness and infinity for which a peer, a second, an equal or a match is not conceivable.

This concept, that the Divine Unity is not a numerical notion, is exclusively an Islamic concept, original and profound, unprecedented in any other school of thought. Even the Muslim philosophers only gradually realized its profundity through contemplating on the spirit of the original Islamic texts, in particular the discourses of Ali (ع), ultimately formally incorporating it in the Islamic metaphysical philosophy. There is no trace of this profound concept in the writings of the early Islamic philosophers like al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Avicenna). Only the later philosophers ushered this concept into their philosophic thinking calling it Really True Unity, in their terminology.

Allah, the First and the Last; the Manifest and the Hidden

One of many issues discussed in Nahjul-Balagha is that Allah is the First and the Last, the Hidden and the Manifest. Of course, like other notions, this, too, has been deduced from the Holy Quran, although here we are not going to quote the verses of the Holy Quran. Allah is the First, but His precedence is not temporal so as to be in contradiction with His being the Last. He is the Manifest, but not in the sense of being physically visible or perceptible by the senses; His Manifestness does not contradict His Hiddenness. In fact, His being the First is identical to His being the

Last; similarly, His being Manifest and Hidden are identical; they are not two different things:

"Praise be to Allah, for whom one condition does not precede another, so that He may he the First before being the Last or may be Manifest before being Hidden."(Sermon 65)

"Time is not His accomplice, nor does He need the assistance of tools and agents His Being transcends time. His Existence transcends nothingness and His pre-eternity transcends all beginning."(Sermon 186)

The Divine Essence`s transcendence over time, nothingness, beginning, and end is one of the most profound concepts of al-hikma philosophy. Allah's pre-eternity does not mean that Allah has always existed. Certainly Allah has always existed but the Divine pre-eternity (azaliyya) is something greater in meaning than "existence at all times" because, "existing at all times" assumes existence in time; but Allah`s Being has not only been at all times, It precedes time itself. This is the meaning of the Divine pre-eternity. This shows that His precedence is something other than temporal precedence. Praise be to Allah Whose creation bears testimony to His Existence; temporality (huduth) of whose creation is the testimony of His "pre-eternity" the similarity and likeness among whose creation proves that He is unique. The senses do not perceive Him and nothing can conceal Him (Sermon 152).

That is to say, Allah is both Hidden and Manifest. By Himself, He is Manifest but is Hidden from, undetectable by, the human senses. His Hiddenness from the senses is due to man`s own limitations, not because of Him.

It needs no proof that existence is synonymous with manifestation; the more powerful the existence of a being, the more manifest it will be. Conversely, the weaker its being is and the more intermingled with non-being, the less manifest it is to itself and to others.

For everything, there are two modes of being: its being-in-itself (wujud fi nafsih), and its being-for-others (wujud fi ghayrih). The being of everything for us depends upon the structure of our senses and on certain special conditions. Accordingly, the manifestation of a thing, a being, is also of two kinds: its manifestation-in-itself (zuhur fi nafsih) and its manifestation-for-others (wujud fi ghayrih).

Our senses, on account of their limitations, are able to perceive only a limited number of finite objects possessing the characteristics of similarity and opposition. The senses can perceive colors, shapes, sounds, etc. which are limited temporally and specifically; that is, their existence is confined within a particular time and place. Now, if there existed a uniform light, always and everywhere, it would not be perceptible. A continuous monotonous sound heard always, constantly, and everywhere, it would not be audible.

The Being of Allah, the Absolute Being and the Absolute Reality, is not confined to any particular time or place and is hidden from our senses. But Allah in Himself is absolutely manifest; the perfection of His manifestness, which follows from the perfection of His Being, is itself the cause of His hiddenness from our senses. The two aspects of His manifestness and hiddenness are one and the same in His Essence. He is hidden because He is perfectly manifest, and this perfect manifestness conceals Him:

"You are hidden on account of Your perfect brilliance; You Art the Manifest, the Hidden in Your manifestness. The veil on Your face is also Your; so manifest You are, Your manifestness conceals Thee from the world's eyes."

An Appraisal

An appraisal, however brief, of the approach of Nahjul-Balagha and its comparison with that of other schools of thought is essential for discovering the true worth of its views on the problems of theology. We shall confine ourselves to the brief, though not quite sufficient, examples quoted in the foregoing pages and proceed to evaluate them.

The subject of the Divine Essence and Attributes is one which has been discussed a lot by the ancient and modern philosophers, mystics and Sufis of the East and of the West. But, in general, their method and approach is totally different from that of Nahjul-Balagha whose approach is highly original and unprecedented. Only in the Holy Quran can a precedent for Nahjul-Balagha be found. Apart from the Holy Quran, we do not find any other source that provides some ground for the discourses of Nahjul-Balagha.

As pointed out earlier, some scholars because of their failure to trace back to some earlier source the notions elaborated in Nahjul-Balagha have questioned the authenticity of ascription of these discourses

to Ali (ع). They have suggested that these discourses appeared in a later period, after the appearance of the Mu`tazilites and the assimilation of the Greek ideology, heedless of the following saying: “The mean earth with the sublime heaven does not compare!

How ignorant it is to compare the Mu`tazilite and the Greek ideologies with the teachings of Nahjul-Balagha!

Nahjul-Balagha and the Notions of Kalam

While ascribing all the Attributes of perfection to Allah, the Exalted One, Nahjul-Balagha negates any separation of these Attributes from His Essence and does not consider them as an appendage of the Divine Essence. On the other hand, the Ash`arites, as we know, consider the Divine Attributes to be additional to the Essence, so the Mutazilites negate all Attributes.

An Asharite Believes in the Separation Of the Attributes from the Essence

A Mutazilite speaks of subservience [of the Attributes to the Essence]. This has led some people to imagine that the discourses found in Nahjul-Balagha on this topic are fabrications of a later period under the influence of Mutazilite views whereas anyone with some insight can readily perceive that the Attributes negated by Nahjul-Balagha with respect to the Divine Essence are qualities of imperfection and limitation: The Divine Essence, being infinite and limitless, necessitates identity of the Attributes with the Essence, not negation of the Attributes as professed by the Mutazilites. Had the Mutazilites reached such a notion, they would never have negated the Divine Attributes, considering them subservient to the Essence.

The same is true of the views on the creating or temporality (huduth) of the Holy Quran in sermon 184. One may imagine that these passages of Nahjul-Balagha relate to the latter heated controversies among the Islamic theologians (mutakallimun) regarding the eternity (qidam) or temporality (huduth) of the Holy Qur’an and which might have been added to Nahjul-Balagha during the latter centuries. However, a little reflection will reveal that the discourses of Nahjul-Balagha relevant to this issue have nothing to do with the debate on the Holy Quran being either created or uncreated, which was a meaningless controversy, but relevant to the creative command (amr takwini), and to

the Will of the Almighty. Ali (ع) says that Allahs Will and Command represent the Divine Acts and, therefore, so are ahadith posterior to the Essence, for if the Command and the Will were co-eternal and identical with His Essence, they will have, necessarily, to be considered His associates and equals. Ali (ع) says the following:

"When He decrees the creation of a thing, He says to it, ABe, and it assumes existence; but not through an audible voice which strikes the ear or a cry that can be heard. Indeed the speech of Allah, glory be to Him, is but His created Act, which did not exist before [it came into existence]. Had it (The Divine speech) been itself eternal, it would be another god besides Him."(Sermon 186)

In addition, there are other musnad traditions on this subject related from Ali (ع), only some of which have been collected in Nahjul-Balagha, and can be traced back to his time. On this basis, there is no room for doubting their genuineness. If any superficial resemblance is observed between the statements made by Ali (ع) and some views held by the Mu`tazilites, the probability to be allowed in this connection is that some of his ideas were adopted by the Mu`tazilites.

The controversies of the Muslim theologians (mutakallimun), both the Shia and the Sunni, the Asharites as well as the Mutazilites, generally revolved around the doctrine of rational basis of ethical judgement concerning good and evil (al-husn wa al-qubh al-"aqliyyan). This doctrine, nothing but a practical principle operating in the human society, is considered by the mutakallimun to be also applicable to the Divine sphere and govern the laws of creation; but we find no trace of it in Nahjul-Balagha. Similarly, there is no sign of it in the Holy Quran. Had the ideas and beliefs of the mutakallimun found their way into Nahjul-Balagha, first of all, the traces of this doctrine should have been found in that book.

Nahjul-Balagha and Philosophical Concepts

Some others, having come across certain words such as "existence" (wujud), "non-existence"(adam), "temporality" (huduth) and "pre-eternity"(qidam) and so on in Nahjul-Balagha, have been led to assume that these terms entered the Muslim intellectual world under the influence of the Greek philosophy and were inserted, intentionally or unintentionally, into the discourses of Ali (ع). Had those who advocate

this view gone deeper into the meanings of these words, they would not have heeded such a hypothesis. The method and approach adopted in the arguments of Nahjul-Balagha are completely different from these of the philosophers who lived before Sayyid al- Radi or during his time, or even those born many centuries after the compilation of Nahjul-Balagha.

Presently, we shall not discuss the metaphysics of the Greek or of the Alexandrians (the neo-Platonic) philosophy but shall confine ourselves to the metaphysical views propounded by al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Undoubtedly, Muslim philosophers introduced new challenges into philosophy under the influence of Islamic teachings which had not existed before, and in addition to them, introducing radically original ways of demonstration and inference to explain and argue their points with regard to some other problems. Nevertheless, what we learn from Nahjul-Balagha is obviously different from this approach. My teacher, allama Tabataba`i, in the preface to his discourse on the traditions of Islamic scholarship, writes the following: "These statements help resolve a number of problems of theological philosophy. Apart from the fact that Muslims were not acquainted with these notions, and they were incomprehensible to the Arabs, basically there is no trace of them in the writings and statements of pre-Islamic philosophers whose books were translated into Arabic and, similarly, they do not appear in the works of Muslim philosophers, Arab or Persian. These problems remained obscure and unintelligible, and every commentator discussed them according to his own conjecture until the eleventh century of the Hijra (17th century A.D.). Only then were they properly understood for the first time, that is, the problem of the True Unity (al-wahda al-haqqa) of the Necessary Being (wajib al-wujud) (a non-numerical unity); the problem that the proof of the existence of the Necessary Being is identical with the proof of His Unity (since the Necessary Being is Absolute Existence, His Being implies His Unity); the problem that the Necessary Existent is the One known-in-His-Essence (ma`lum bil dhat); the Necessary Being is known directly without the need of an intermediary, and that the reality of everything else is known through the Necessary Being, not vice versa."[37]

The arguments of early Muslim philosophers like al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, such as the discussions on the Divine Essence and Attributes like Unity, Simplicity (basata), Self-Sufficiency, Knowledge, Power, Will, Providence, and so on, revolve

[37] *Maktab-e-tashayyu* No. 2, p. 120.

around the conception of the necessity of existence (wujub al-wujud), from which all of them are derived, and the necessity of existence itself is indirectly deduced. In this fashion, it is demonstrated that the existence of all possible existent beings (mumkinat) cannot be explained without assuming the existence of the Necessary Being. Although the argument used for proving the truth of this argument cannot be called a demonstration of the impossible (burhan khulf), in view of its indirect mode of inference, it resembles burhan khulf and, hence, it fails to provide a completely satisfactory demonstration, for it does not explain the necessity of the existence of the Necessary Being. Ibn Sina, in his Al-'Isharat, claims that he has succeeded in discovering the "Why?" (lima) of it and, hence, chooses to call his argument Aburhan al-siddiqin (burhan limmi, i.e. causal proof). However, the latter philosophers considered his exposition of "the Why?"(lima) as insufficient.

In Nahjul-Balagha, the necessity of existence is never used to explain the existence of possible beings (mumkinat). That on which this book relies for this purpose is the real criterion of the necessity of existence, that is, the absolute reality and the pure being of the Divine Essence.

Allama Tabataba'i, in the above-mentioned work, while explaining one hadith by Ali (ع), found in Al-Tawhid of Shaikh al-Saduq, says the following: "The basis of our discussion rests upon the principle that the Divine Being is a reality that does not accept any limits or restrictions whatsoever. Because Allah, the Most Exalted, is the Absolute Reality from Whom the existence of all other beings is derived within the ontological limits and characteristics peculiar to themselves, and their existence depends on that of this Absolute Being."[38]

In Nahjul-Balagha, the very basis of all discussions revolving on the Divine Essence rests on the status that Allah is the Absolute and Infinite Being Who transcends all limits and finitude. No point of space time, or anything at all is devoid of Him. He is with everything, in everything, yet nothing is with Him or in Him. Since He is the Absolute and the Infinite, He transcends time, number, limit and proximity (all kinds of quiddities). That is, time and space, number and limit are applicable to a lower stage, i.e. The stage of the Divine actions and of creation. Everything is from Him and returns to Him. He is the First of the

[38] *Ibid.* p. 126.

first and the Last of the last. He precedes everything and succeeds everything.

This is the idea that forms the axis of all discourses of Nahjul-Balagha and of which there is no trace in the works of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazali, and Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi.

As pointed out by allama Tabatabai, these profound discussions of theology proper (ilahiyyat bil-mana al-akhass) are based on a series of inter-related problems which have been posited in metaphysics (al-umur al-ammah).[39] An elaborate discussion of those theological problems and their relevant issues mentioned above is outside the scope of our present discussion.

There are two reasons for rejecting the claims that the theological discussions of Nahjul-Balagha were inventions of later writers familiar with philosophical notions. Firstly, the kind of problems discussed in Nahjul-Balagha were not at all raised by any philosopher till the time of Sayyid ar-Radi, compiler of Nahjul-Balagha. That the Unity of the Necessary Being is not of the numerical kind and that the Divine Essence precedes number, that the existence of the Necessary Being implies Its Unity; the simple reality of the Necessary Being; His immanence and other such notions were not known to philosophy during or before Sayyid ar-Radis times. Secondly, the axes of arguments presented in this book are altogether different from the axes of philosophical discussions which have been prevalent throughout history until the present day.

Nahjul-Balagha and Western Philosophic Thought

Nahjul-Balagha has played a great role in the history of Eastern Philosophy. Mulla Sadra, who brought a revolution in theological thought (al-hikmat al-ilahiyya), was under the profound influence of Ali`s discourses. His method of argument with regard to the problems of Tawhid is the method of inferring the Essence from the Essence, and also deducing the Attributes and Acts from the Essence, and all these arguments are based on the belief that there exists the Necessary Being only. These arguments are based on radically different general principles which are elaborated in his system of metaphysics.

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[39] *Ibid.* p. 157.

Eastern theological thought (al-hikmat al-"ilahiyya) attained fruition and strength from the sources of Islamic teachings and was firmly established on inviolable foundations. However, theological philosophy in the West remained deprived of such a source of inspiration. The widespread philosophical malaise of inclination towards materialism in the West has many causes whose discussion is outside the scope of our discourse. But we believe that the major cause of this phenomenon is the weakness and insufficiency of theological conceptions of Western religious thought.[40] Anyone interested in making a comparative study of the approaches pointed out in these chapters should first study the arguments advanced by Western philosophers such as Anselm, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant and others for proving the existence of Allah and their discussions about acceptance or rejection of various arguments, then he should compare them with the burhan al-siddiqin argument advanced by Mulla Sadra under the inspiration of Ali's words. He would see for himself the wide chasm that separates one from the other.

[40]See Murtada Mutahhari, *Ilal-e-garayesh beh maddigari* (The causes of inclination towards Materialism), under the chapter: *Naresa iha you mafahi me falsafiI* (The inadequacies of [Western] Philosophical Ideologies).

Suluk and Ibada

Ibada, or service, of the One God and the negation of everything else, as an object of service and worship, is one of the essential teachings of God-sent Messengers, a feature never absent from the teachings of any prophet. As we know, in the sacred religion of Islam, too, worship occupies a prominent status, with the only difference that worship in Islam is not regarded as a series of devotional rituals separate from everyday life and as pertaining solely to another world. Worship in Islam is located in the context of life and is an unalienable part of the Islamic philosophy of life.

Aside from the fact that some of the Islamic acts of worship are performed collectively, Islam has structured them in such a fashion that their performance automatically ensures the performance of other duties of life as well. For instance, salat is a complete expression of man`s servitude and surrender to Allah. It has been specified in such a manner that even a man who desires to pray in a lonely corner is forced to observe certain things of moral and social relevance, such as cleanliness, respect for the rights of others, observance of punctuality, possession of a sense of direction, control over one`s emotions, and expression of good-will and benevolence towards other righteous servants of Allah!.

From the Islamic point of view, every good and beneficial action, if performed with a pure, God-seeking intention, is viewed as an act of worship. Hence, learning, acquisition of knowledge and livelihood and social services, if performed for Allah`s sake, are acts of worship. Nevertheless, Islam also specifies a system of rituals and formal acts of worship such as salat, sawm (fasting) etc. each having a specific philosophy for performing it.

The Levels of Worship

Men have varying attitudes towards worship. Not all of them view it in the same light. For some, worship is a kind of deal, a barter and an exchange of labor performed for wages. Like an ordinary worker who spends his time and labor for the benefit of an employer and expects a daily wage in return, the devotee also endeavors for the sake of the Divine reward, which, however, he would receive in the Hereafter. Like the laborer, for whom his labor bears fruit in the form of his wages and who

would not work except for a wage, the benefit of the devotee's worship, according to the outlook of this particular group of devotees, lies in the wages and rewards which shall be granted to the devotees in the form of the things and the means of comfort in the other world.

However, every employer pays wages in return for the benefit which he derives from his employees, but what benefit can the Master of the heavens derive from the labours of a weak and feeble servant of His? Moreover, if we assume that the Great Employer does remunerate His servants in the form of the blessings and rewards of the Hereafter, then why does He not reward them without any effort and consumption of labour and energy? These are questions which never occur to this class of the pious. From their viewpoint, the essence of worship lies in certain visible bodily movements and oscillations of the tongue. This is one attitude towards worship. Unrefined and vulgar it may be, it is, in the words of Ibn Sina, as he puts it in the ninth chapter of his book titled Al-Isharat, the attitude of the unenlightened and God-ignorant is acceptable only by the plebeians.

Another approach towards worship is that of the enlightened. Here, the aforementioned problems of worker and employer, labour and wage, have no relevance. How can they be relevant when worship is viewed by them as the ladder to attain nearness to Allah, as the means of human sublimity, edification and upliftment of the soul and its flight to the invisible sphere of spiritual greatness, an invigorating exercise of one's spiritual faculties and a triumph of the spirit over the corporeal? It is the highest expression of the gratitude and love of the human being towards his Creator, his declaration of love for the Most Perfect and the Absolutely Beautiful One and, finally, his wayfaring towards Allah!

According to this approach, worship has a form and a soul, an appearance and an inner meaning. That which is expressed by the tongue and the movements of other parts of the body, is the form, the outer mold, and the appearance of worship. Its soul and meaning is something else. The soul of worship is inextricably connected with the significance attached to worship by the devotee, his attitude towards it, his inner motive that drives him to it, the ultimate satisfaction and benefit he derives from it, and the extent to which he covers the Divine path in his journey towards Allah.

The Approach of Nahjul-Balagha

What is the approach and the attitude adopted by Nahjul-Balagha towards worship? Nahjul-Balagha takes an enlightened view of worship or, rather, it is, after the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (ص), the main source of inspiration towards the enlightened approach to worship in the Islamic tradition.

As we know, of the most sublime and imaginative themes of Islamic literature, both Arabic and Persian, is the relationship between the ardent love of the devotee for the Divine Essence expressed in delicate and elegant passages in the form of sermons, prayers, allegories, parables, both in prose and in verse. When we compare them with the pre-Islamic notions prevalent in the regions which subsequently constituted the domains of Islam, it is surprising to observe the gigantic leap that was taken by Islam in bestowing depth, scope, sweetness, and delicacy to human thought. Islam transformed a people who worshipped idols, images, fire, or degraded the Eternal God to the level of a human A Father, and whose flight of imagination prompted them to identify the "Father" with the "Son", or who officially considered the Ahura Mazda to be a material form whose statues they erected in every place, into a people whose intellect could grasp and evolve the most abstract of concepts, the most sophisticated of ideas, the most elegant of thoughts and the most sublime of notions.

How was the human intellect so radically transformed? What revolutionized those people's logic, elevated their thoughts, refined their emotions and sublimated their values? How did it all happen? the al-Mu`allaqat al-sab`a and Nahjul-Balagha stand only one generation apart from each other. Both of those generations of Arabs were proverbial in eloquence and literary genius. As to the content, they stand as far apart as the earth and the sky. The former sing of the beauty of the beloved one, the pleasures of love, of gallantry, of horses, spears, the nightly assaults and compose praise and lampoon; the latter contains the most sublime of the ideologies of man.

In order to elucidate the approach of Ali (ع) towards worship, we now shall proceed to cite few examples from Nahjul-Balagha, beginning with a statement about the differences in various approaches of people towards worship.

The Worship of Freemen

"Some people worship Allah out of their desire for rewards; this is the worship of traders. Another group worships Allah out of fear; this is the worship of slaves. Yet another group worships Allah out of gratitude; this is the worship of freemen."[41]

"Even if Allah had not warned those disobedient to Him of chastisement, it was obligatory by way of gratefulness for His favors that He should not be disobeyed."[42]

"Lord! I have not worshipped You out of fear of Your Hell nor out of greed for Your Paradise; but I found Thee worthy of being worshipped, so I worshipped Thee."[43]

Remembering Allah

The roots of all spiritual, moral and social aspects of worship lie in one thing: The remembrance of Allah and the obliviousness towards everything else. In one of its verses, the Holy Quran refers to the educative and the invigorating effect of worship and says the following:

> Salat protects from unseemly acts. (29: 45)
>
> Adhere to salat so that you may remain in My remembrance. (20: 14)

This is a reminder of the fact that the person who prays remembers Allah and lives by the knowledge that He is always observing and watching him. He does not forget that he himself is His servant.

The remembrance of Allah, which is the aim of worship, is the burnishing of the heart and the object of its purification. It prepares the heart for the reflection of the Divine Light in it. Speaking of the remembrance of Allah and of the meaning of worship, Ali (ع) says the following:

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[41] *Nahjul-Balagha*, *Hikam*, No. 237.

[42] *Ibid*. *Hikam*, No. 290.

[43] Reference is not indicated. __Tr.

"Certainly Allah, the Glorified One, has made His remembrance the burnishing of the hearts which makes them hear after deafness, see after blindness and which makes them submissive after unruliness. In all periods and times when there were no prophets, there were individuals to whom He spoke in whispers through their conscience and intellect."[44]

These sentences speak of the wonderful effect of the Divine remembrance on the heart, to the extent of making it capable of receiving the Divine inspiration and bringing it in intimate communion with Allah.

The Levels of Devotion

In the same sermon are explained the various spiritual states and levels attained by the worshippers in the course of their devotional pursuit. Ali (ع) describes such men in these words:

"The angels have surrounded them and peace is showered upon them. The doors of heaven are opened for them and the abodes of bliss, of which He had informed them, have been prepared for them. He is pleased with their struggle and admires their station. When they call upon Him, they breathe the fragrance of His forgiveness and mercy."[45]

Nights of the Devout

From the point of view of Nahjul-Balagha, the world of worship is another world altogether. Its delights are not comparable with any pleasures of the three-dimensional corporeal world. The world of worship effuses movement, progress and journey, a journey which is quite unlike physical travel to new lands. It is a spiritual journey to the "nameless"city. It does not distinguish night from day because it is always drenched in light. In it, there is no trace of darkness or pain, for it is purity, sincerity, and delight all over. Happy is the man, in the view of Nahjul-Balagha, who sets his foot into this world and is refreshed by its invigorating breeze. Such a man, then, no longer cares whether he lays his head on a silk pillow or on a stone:

"Blessed is he who carries out his duties towards his Master and endures the hardships they entail. He allows himself no sleep at night

[44] *Ibid*. *Khutab*, No. 222.

[45] *Ibid*. p. 343.

until it overwhelms him. Then he lies down with the palm of his hand under his head as his pillow. He is among those whom the thought of the Day of Judgement keeps awake at nights, whose bed remains vacant, whose lips hum in Allah's remembrance and whose sins have been erased by their prolonged earnest supplication for forgiveness These are the 'Party of Allah'; '... surely [members of] Allah`s Party are the ones who prosper!'"[46]

The nights of the men of Allah are like shiny days,

Gloomy nights do not exist for the enlightened.

The Profile of the Pious

In the last section we discussed the viewpoint of Nahjul-Balagha with respect to worship. We found that Nahjul-Balagha does not regard worship as a series of cut-and-dried, lifeless rituals. The bodily movements constitute the apparent motion of worship while its soul and meaning are something else. Only when endowed with meaning and spirit is the worship worthy of its name. Real worship means the transcending of the three-dimensional world into the spiritual sphere, which is a world of perpetual delight and sublimation for the soul and the source of vigour and strength for the heart which has its own pleasures.

There are many references to the characteristics of the pious and the devout in Nahjul-Balagha. Often, Nahjul-Balagha sketches the profiles of the pious and the devout and describes their characteristic fear of Allah, their devotion and delight in worship, their constant sorrow and grief over sins. It describes their frequent recitation of the Holy Quran, their occasional ecstatic experiences and states which they achieve in the course of their worshipful endeavours and struggle against their corporeal self. At times, it discusses the role of worship in lifting the human soul from the pall of sins and black deeds and often points out to the effect of worship in curing moral and psychological ailments. At other times, it speaks about the unadulterated, unsurpassable and pure delights and ecstasies of the followers of the spiritual path, the sincere worshippers of Allah.

[46] *Ibid*. *Rasa'il,* No. 45.

Night Vigils

"During the night, they are on their feet reciting the verses of the Holy Quran one after the other, tarrying to deliberate about their meanings and thereby instilling gnostic pathos into their souls and by means of it seek remedy for their spiritual ailments. What they hear from the Holy Quran seems to them as if they are witnessing it with their own eyes. If they come across a verse arousing eagerness (for Paradise), they lean towards it eagerly, their souls clinging to it avidly, as if they are approaching their ultimate goal. And when they come across a verse that instills fear, their hearts' ear is turned in attention to it as if they themselves hear the cracking sound of the flames of Hell Fire. Their backs are bent in reverence and their foreheads, palms, knees and toes rest on the ground as they beseech Allah for salvation. But when the day dawns, they are kind, patient, scholarly, pious and righteous."[47]

The Spiritual Experience

"He has revived his intellect and slain his self until his body became lean and its bulkiness shrunk, and stubbornness turned into tenderness (of heart). Then an glory, like a thunderbolt, descended upon his heart, illuminating the path before him, opening all the doors and leading him straight into the gateway of Peace. Now his feet, carrying his body, are firmly rooted in the status of safety (on the Sirat) and comfort because he kept his heart busy with good deeds and won the good pleasure of his God."[48]

As we observe, this passage speaks of another kind of life, the life of intellect. It speaks of struggle against the carnal self (al-nafs al-ammara bil su') and its destruction; it speaks of exercises of the spirit and the body, about lightening which, as a result of such an exercise, illuminates the being of the follower and brightens his spiritual world; it speaks of the stages and targets that the devotee's earnest soul reaches on its way until it attains the last and the highest stage of man's spiritual journey. The Holy Quran says the following:

> O man! You are labouring unto your Lord laboriously, and thou shalt encounter Him. (84: 6)

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[47] *Ibid*. *Khutab*, No. 193.

[48] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No. 220.

Ali (ع), in the passage cited above, speaks about the inner peace, contentment and tranquility of the soul which a man's restless, disturbed and anxious heart ultimately attains:

> Indeed, the hearts are at rest in Allah's remembrance.
> (13: 28)

In sermon 228, Ali (ع) describes the significance attached by this class of devotees to spiritual life-the life of the heart: "They see that the worldly people attach great importance to the death of their bodies, but they themselves attach much greater importance to the death of hearts of the living"(Sermon 230).[49]

Ali (ع) describes the ecstatic eagerness of the earnest souls which impels them to move onwards on the path of spiritual perfection in these words: "They lived in the society and participated in its affairs with their bodies, while their souls rested in the higher spiritual spheres."[50]

"Had there been no preordained time of death for each of them, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of their eagerness for the Divine reward and their fear of chastisement."[51]

"He did everything only for the sake of Allah, so Allah also made him His own."[52]

The esoteric knowledge and emanated insight, revealed to the heart of the follower of the spiritual path as a result of self-education and self-refinement, is described in these words:

"The knowledge that bursts upon them and surrounds them is endowed with absolute certainty, and their soul attains the highest degree of conviction. They easily bear what the easy-going regard as harsh and unbearable. They endear what makes the ignorant recoil with horror."[53]

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[49] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No. 230.

[50] *Ibid*. *Hikam*, No. 147.

[51] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No. 193.

[52] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No. 87.

[53] *Ibid*. *Hikam*, No. 147.

The Purging of Sins

From the point of view of Islamic teachings, every sin leaves a black stain and the effects of distortion in the human heart which, in turn, weakens a person`s aptitude for good and righteous deeds. Consequently, it further causes him to deviate and commit other sins and foul deeds as well. On the other hand, worship, prayer and remembrance of Allah develop a human being's religious consciousness, strengthen his aptitude for virtuous deeds and diminish his proneness to sinning. This means that worship and remembrance of Allah efface the bad effects of sins, replacing them with fondness for virtue and goodness.

In Nahjul-Balagha, there is a sermon which deals with salat, zakat and the delivering of the trust back to its owner. Having emphasized the importance of salat, Ali (ع) further says the following: "Certainly, prayer removes sins like autumn strips leaves off from trees, and it liberates you from the rope (of sins which is) tied around your neck. The Prophet (ص) likened it to a refreshing stream at one's door in which one takes a purifying bath five times during the day and the night. Will, after so much cleansing, any dirt remain on him?[54]

Moral Remedy

In sermon 196, after making a reference to evil conduct, such as disobedience, oppression, injustice and arrogance, Ali (ع) says the following: "It is on account of these perils that Allah has encouraged His believing servants to perform salat and to pay zakat, to fast during the days when fast is obligatory; these acts of worship provide their limbs with peace and rest, casting fear in their eyes, softening their spirits, cultivating a sense of humility in their hearts and purging them from pride."

Intimacy and Ecstasy

"Lord! You, of all beloved ones, are the most attached to Your lovers and the most ready to trust those who place their trust in You. You see, You look into their secrets and know that which lies in their conscience and are aware of the extent of their inner vision. Consequently, their secrets are open to You and their hearts look up to

[54] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No.199.

You in eager apprehension. In loneliness, Your remembrance is their friend and consolation. In distress Your help is their protection."[55]

There are some people devoted to remembrance of Allah Who have chosen it in place of all worldly goods.[56]

In sermon 148, Ali (ع) alludes to the coming times of the Promised al-Mahdi (ع), may Allah hasten his appearance, and at the end of his discourse describes the courage, wisdom, insight and attributes of the Imam (ع) and his supporters. Then a group of people will be made ready by Allah like the swords sharpened by the blacksmith. Their sight would be brightened by revelations the inner meaning of the Holy Quran would be familiar to their ears and they would be given to drink the cup of wisdom every morning and evening.[57]

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[55] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No.227.

[56] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No.222.

[57] *Ibid*. *Khutab* No.150.

Government and Justice

Nahjul-Balagha on State

One of the frequently discussed issues in Nahjul-Balagha is government and justice. To anyone who goes through the book, it is evident to what extent Ali (ع) is sensitive to the issues related to government and justice. He considers them to be of paramount importance. For those who lack an understanding of Islam but have knowledge of the teachings of other religions, it is astonishing why a religious personality should devote himself to this sort of problem. Don't such problems relate to the world and worldly life?! Shouldn't a sage keep aloof from the matters of the world and society? They thus wonder.

On the other hand, such a thing is not at all surprising for one acquainted with the teachings of Islam and the details of Ali`s life, i.e. That Ali (ع) was brought up from childhood by the Holy Prophet (ص) of Islam, that the Prophet (ص), having taken him from his father as a child, had reared him in his home under his own care, that the Prophet (ص) had trained Ali (ع) and instructed him in his own characteristic way, teaching him the secrets of Islam. Ali`s spirit had assimilated within itself the doctrines of Islam and the code of its laws. Therefore, it is not unusual that Ali (ع) should have been as such; rather, it would have been astonishing if he was not as such, as we find him to be. Does not the Holy Quran declare: "Indeed, We sent Our messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice"(57: 25)?

In this verse, the establishment of justice has been declared as the objective of the mission of all the prophets. The sanctity of justice is so stressed that it is considered the aim of all prophetic missions. Hence, how were it possible that someone like Ali (ع), whose duty was to expound the teachings of the Holy Quran and explain the doctrines and laws of Islam, might have ignored this issue or, at least, accorded it a secondary importance?

Those who neglect these issues in their teachings or imagine that these problems are only of marginal significance, and that the central

issues are those of ritual purity and impurity (taharah and najasah), it is essential that they should re-examine their own beliefs and views.

The Importance of Politics

The first thing which must be examined is the significance and value attached to the issue of government and justice by Nahjul-Balagha. Indeed, what is essentially the importance of these problems in Islam? A thorough discussion of this question is obviously outside the scope of this book, but by way of a casual reference, however, it seems inevitable to lightly touch upon. The Holy Quran, in the verse where it commands the Prophet (ص) to inform the people that Ali (ع) would succeed him as the leader of the Muslims and the Prophet's khalifah, declares the following with extraordinary insistence: "O Messenger! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, for if you do not do so, you will not have delivered His Message at all!"(5: 67).

Is there any other issue in Islam to which this much importance is attached? What other issue is of such a significance that, if not communicated to the people, it would amount to the failure of the prophetic mission itself?

During the battle of Uhud, when the Muslims were defeated and the rumor spread that the Holy Prophet (ص) had been killed, a group of Muslims fled from the battlefield. Referring to this incident, the Holy Quran says the following: "Muhammad is naught but a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him. Why, if he should die or is slain, will you turn about on your heels?"(3: 144)

`Allama Tabataba'i, in an article titled Wilayat wa-hakumat, derives the following conclusion from the above verse: "If the Messenger (ص) is killed in battle, it should not in any way stall, even temporarily, your struggle. Immediately afterwards, you should place yourselves under the banner of the successor to the Prophet (ص) and continue your endeavor. In other words, if, supposedly, the Prophet (ص) is killed or if he dies, the social system and military organization of the Muslims should not disintegrate.

There is one hadith wherein the Prophet (ص) said, "If (as few as) three persons go on a journey, they must appoint one from among themselves as their leader. From this, one may infer to what extent the

Prophet (ص) regarded as harmful the disorder and absence of authority that could resolve social conflicts and serve as a unifying bond among individuals.

Nahjul-Balagha deals with numerous problems concerning the State and social justice, a few of which, Allah willing, we shall discuss here.

The first problem to be discussed here is that of the necessity and value of a State. Ali (ع) has repeatedly stressed the need for a powerful government and, in his own time, battled against the views propagated by the Kharijites who, in the beginning, denied the need for a State, considering the Holy Quran as sufficient. The slogan of the Kharijites, as is known, was: "The right of judgement (or authority to rule) belongs exclusively to Allah (la hukm illa li-Allah), a phrase adopted from the Holy Quran. Its Quranic meaning is that the prerogative of legislation belongs to Allah or those whom Allah has permitted to legislate."But the Kharijites interpreted it differently. According to Ali (ع), they had imparted a false sense to a true statement. The essence of their view was that no human being has any right to rule others; sovereignty belongs exclusively to Allah. Ali's argument was:

Yes, I also say la hukm illa li-Allah, in the sense that the right of legislation belongs solely to Allah. But their claim that the prerogative to govern and to lead also belongs to Allah is not reasonable. After all, the laws of Allah need to be implemented by human beings. Men cannot do without a ruler, good or evil.[58]

It is under the protection of a State that the believers strive for Allah's sake, and the unbelievers derive material benefit from their worldly endeavors, and men attain the fruits of their labor. It is through the authority of the State that taxes are collected, aggressors are repelled, the security of highways is maintained, and the weak reclaim their rights (through the courts of law) from the strong. (This process continues) until the good citizens are happy and secure from the evils of miscreants (Nahjul-Balagha, Khutab 40).

[58]That is so in the absence of a righteous government, an unjust government, one which is expected to at least preserves law and order in the society, something which is, of course, better than chaos and the rule of jungle.

Ali (ع), like other godly men and spiritual leaders, despises temporal power and political office for being lowly and degrading when it serves as an instrument of gratification of lust for power and political ambition. He looks down upon it with extreme contempt when it is desired as an end-in-itself and aspired as an ideal of life. He considers such kind of power to be devoid of any value, considering it to be more detestable than "a pig's bone in a leper's hand."But the same power and leadership, if used as a means for the establishment and execution of social justice and service to society, is regarded by him as a thing of paramount sanctity, something for which he is willing to fight any opportunist and political adventurer seeking to grab power and illegitimate wealth. In its defense, he does not hesitate to draw his sword against plunderers and usurpers.

During the days of Ali's caliphate, `Abdullah ibn Abbas once went to see him. He found Ali (ع) mending his old shoes with his own hand. Turning to Ibn Abbas, Ali (ع) asked him, "How much do you think this shoe is worth?" "Nothing, replied Ibn Abbas."Ali (ع) said, "Yet the same shoe is of more value to me than authority over you [folks] if it were not to me a means for establishing justice, recovering the rights of the deprived and wiping out evil practices"(Khutab 33).

In sermon 216, we come across a general discussion about human rights and duties. Here, Ali (ع) states that every right always involves two parties. Of the various Divine duties, the ones which Allah has ordained are duties of people towards people; they are framed in such a way that each right necessitates a duty towards others; each right which benefits an individual or a group holds the individual or group responsible to fulfil some duty towards others. Every duty becomes binding when the other party also fulfils his duty. He says the following further regarding this issue:

"But the most important of the reciprocal rights that Allah has made obligatory is the right of the ruler over the subjects and the rights of the subjects over the ruler. It is a mutual and reciprocal obligation decreed by Allah for them. He has made it the basis of the strength of their society and of their religion. Consequently, the subjects cannot prosper unless the rulers are righteous. The rulers cannot be righteous unless the subjects are firm and steadfast. If the subjects fulfil their duties toward the ruler and the ruler his duty to them, righteousness prevails among them. Only then are the objectives of the religion realized, the pillars of justice become stable and wholesome traditions become established. In this way, better

conditions of life and social environment emerge. People become eager to safeguard the integrity of the State and thus frustrate the plots of its enemies"(Khutab 126).

Justice: "Supreme Value"

The first outcome of the sacred teachings of Islam was the influence exercised on the minds and ideologies of its adherents. Not only did Islam introduce new teachings regarding the world, man and his society, but also changed the ways of thinking. The importance of the latter achievement is not less than the former.

Every teacher imparts new knowledge to his pupils, and every school of thought provides new information to its adherents. But the teachers and schools of thought who furnish their followers with a new logic and revolutionize their ways of thinking altogether are few.

But how do the ways of thinking change and one logic replaces another? This requires some elucidation.

Man, by virtue of being a rational creature, thinks rationally about scientific and social issues. His arguments, intentionally or unintentionally, are based on certain principles and axioms. All his conclusions are drawn from and judgements are based on them. The difference in ways of thinking originates precisely in these first principles or axioms. This is used as the ground for inferences and conclusions. Here, it is crucial what premises and axioms form the foundation for inference, and here lies the cause of all disparity in inferences and conclusions. In every age, there is a close similarity between the ways of thinking of those familiar with the intellectual spirit of the age on scientific issues. However, the difference is conspicuous between the intellectual spirits of different ages. But with regard to social problems, such a similarity and consensus is not found even among persons who are contemporaries. There is a secret behind this. To elaborate on it would take us outside the scope of the present discussion.

Man, in his confrontation with social and moral problems, is inevitably led to adopt some sort of value-orientation. In his assessments, he arrives at a certain hierarchy of values in which he arranges all issues. This order or hierarchy of values plays a significant role in the adoption of the kind of basic premises and axioms which he utilizes. It makes him think differently from others who have differently evaluated the issues and have arrived at a different hierarchy of values. This is what leads to a

disparity among the ways of thinking. Take, for example, the question of feminine chastity, which is a matter of social significance. Do all people prescribe a similar system of evaluation with regard to this issue? Certainly not. There is a great amount of disparity between views. For some, its significance is near zero and it plays no part in their thinking. For some, the matter is of utmost value. The latter regard life as worthless in an environment where feminine chastity is regarded as unimportant.

When we say that Islam has revolutionized the ways of thinking, what is meant is that it has drastically altered their system and hierarchy of values. It has elevated values like taqwa (God-fearing), which had no value at all in the past, to a very high status and attached an unprecedented importance to it. On the other hand, it deflated the value of such factors as lineage, race and the like which in the pre-Islamic days were of predominant significance, bringing their worth to zero. Justice is one of the values revived by Islam and is given an extraordinary status. It is true that Islam has recommended justice and stressed its implementation, but what is very significant is that it elevates its value in the society. It is better to leave the elaboration of this point to Ali (ع) himself and see what Nahjul-Balagha says. A man of intelligence and understanding put the following question to Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع): "Which is superior, justice or generosity?"(Hikam 437).

Here, the question is about two human qualities. Man has always detested oppression and injustice and has also held in high regard acts of kindness and benevolence performed without the hope of reward or a return. Apparently, the answer to the above question seems both obvious and easy: generosity is superior to justice, for what is justice except observance of the rights of others and avoiding violating them? But a generous man willingly foregoes his own right in preference of another person over himself. The just man does not transgress the rights of others; he safeguards their rights from being violated. But the generous man sacrifices his own right for another's sake. Therefore, generosity must be superior to justice.

In truth, the above reasoning appears to be quite valid when we estimate their worth from the viewpoint of individual morality and generosity, more so than that of justice. This seems to be a sign of human perfection and the nobleness of the human soul. But Ali's reply is contrary to the above answer. Ali (ع) gives two reasons for the superiority of justice over generosity. Firstly, he says the following: "Justice puts

things in their proper place and generosity diverts them from their (natural) direction.

The meaning of justice is that the natural deservedness of everybody must be taken into consideration; everyone should be given his due worth according to his work, ability and qualifications. Society is comparable to a machine whose every part has a proper place and function.

It is true that generosity is a quality of great worth from the point of view that a generous man donates to another what legitimately belongs to him, but we must note that it is an unnatural occurrence. It may be compared to a body one of whose organs is malfunctioning while its other healthy organs and parts temporarily redirect their activity to the recovery of the suffering organ. From the social point of view, it would be far more preferable if the society did not possess such sick members at all, so that the healthy organs and members may completely devote their activities and energies to the general growth and perfection of the society, instead of being absorbed with helping and assisting a particular member.

To return to Ali's reply, the other reason he gives for preferring justice to generosity is this:

Justice is the general caretaker, whereas generosity is a particular reliever.

That is, justice is like a general law which is applicable to the management of all the affairs of the society. Its benefit is universal and all-embracing; it is the highway which serves all and everyone. But generosity is something exceptional and limited, which cannot be always relied upon. Basically, if generosity were to become a general rule, it would no longer be regarded as such. Deriving his conclusion, Ali (ع) says the following: "Consequently, justice is the nobler of the two and possesses the greater merit. This way of thinking about man and human problems is one based on a specific value system rooted in the idea of the fundamental importance of the society. In this system of values, social principles and criteria precede the norms of individual morality. The former is a principle, whereas the latter is only a ramification. The former is a trunk, while the latter is a branch of it. The former is the foundation of the structure, whereas the latter is an embellishment.

From Ali's viewpoint, it is the principle of justice that is of crucial significance in preserving the balance of society, and winning the

goodwill of the public. Its practice can ensure the health of the society and bring peace to its soul. Oppression, injustice and discrimination cannot bring peace and happiness even to the tyrant or to the one in whose interest the injustice is perpetrated. Justice is like a public highway which has room for all and through which everyone may pass without impediment. But injustice and oppression constitute a blind alley which does not lead even the oppressor to his desired destination.

As is known, during his caliphate, Othman ibn Affan put a portion of the public property of the Muslims at the disposal of his kinsmen and friends. After the death of Othman, Ali (ع) assumed power. Ali (ع) was advised by some people to overlook whatever injustice had occurred in the past and to do nothing about it, to confine his efforts to what would befall from then on during his own caliphate. But to this his reply was: "A long standing right does not become invalid [because of the passage of time]!"

Then he exclaimed: "By Allah! Even if I find that by such misappropriated money women have been married or bondmaids bought, I would reclaim it and have it returned to the public treasury. There is a wide scope and room in the dispensation of justice. [Justice is vast enough to include and envelop everyone;] he who [being of a diseased temperament] finds restriction and hardship in justice should know that the path of injustice and oppression is harder and even more restricted"(Khutab, No. 15).

Justice, according to this concept, is a barrier and a limit to be observed, respected and believed in by everyone. All should be content to remain within its limits. But if its limits are broken and violated, and if both belief in it and respect for it are lost while human greed and lust, being insatiable by nature, would not stop at any limit, the further man advances on this interminable journey of greed and lust, the greater becomes his dissatisfaction.

Indifference to Injustice

Ali (ع) regards justice to be a duty and a the Divine trust. To him, it is a the Divine sanctity. He does not expect a Muslim who is aware and informed about the teachings of Islam to be an idle spectator at the scenes of injustice and discrimination.

In his sermon called al-Shaqshaqiyya, after relating the pathetic political episodes of the past, Ali (ع) proceeds to advance his reasons for accepting the caliphate. He mentions how, after the assassination of "Othman, the people thronged around him urging him to agree to lead the Muslims. But Ali (ع), after the unfortunate events of the past and being aware of the extent of deterioration in the then prevailing situation, was not disposed to accept that grave responsibility. Nevertheless, he saw that if he should reject the caliphate, the face of truth would become still more clouded, and it might be alleged that he was not interested in this matter from the very beginning, that he gave no importance to such affairs. Moreover, in view of the fact that Islam does not consider it permissible for anyone to remain an idle spectator in a society divided into two classes of oppressed and oppressors, one suffering the pangs of hunger and the other well-fed and uneasy with the discomforts of over-eating, there was no alternative for Ali (ع) but to shoulder this heavy responsibility. He himself explains this in the aforementioned sermon: "By the One Who split the grain and created living things [do I swear]! Had it not been for the presence of the pressing crowd, were it not for the establishment of (Allah's) testimony upon me through the existence of supporters, and had it not been for the pledge of Allah with the learned, to the effect that they should not connive with the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the reins of the caliphate on its own shoulders and would have made the last one drink from the same cup that I made the first one to drink (i.e. I would have taken the same stance towards the caliphate as at the time of the first caliph). You would have seen then that in my view the world of yours is not worth more than a goat's sneeze"(Khutab, No. 3).

Justice Should not be Compromised

Favoritism, nepotism, partiality and shutting up of mouths by big morsels, have always been the essential tools of politicians. Now a man had assumed power and captained the ship of the caliphate who profoundly detested these things. In fact, his main objective was to struggle and fight against this kind of politics. Naturally, with the very inception of Ali's reign, the politicians with their hopes and expectations were disappointed. Their disappointment soon grew into subversive conspiracies against Ali's government, creating for him many a headache. Well-meaning friends, with sincere goodwill, advised Ali (ع) to adopt a greater flexibility in his policies for the sake of higher interests. Their advice was: "Extricate yourself from the ruses of these demagogues, as is said, "sewing the dog's mouth with a big morsel."These are influential

persons. Some of them are from among the elite sahaba of the dawn of Islam. Presently, your real enemy is Mu`awiyah who is in control of a rich and fertile province, Syria. The wisdom lies in setting aside, for the time being, the matter of equality and justice. What harm is there in it?

Ali (ع) replied to them saying, "Do you really ask me to seek support through injustice [to my subjects and to sacrifice justice for the sake of political gain]?! By Allah! I will not do it as long as the world lasts and one star follows another in the sky [i.e. I will not do it as long as the order of the universe exists]. Even if it were my own property, I would distribute it with justice. And why not, since it is the property of Allah and I am His trustee?"(Khutba 126).

This is an example of how highly Ali (ع) valued justice and what status it held in his opinion.

People's Rights

The needs of a human being are not confined to food, clothing and housing. It may be possible to keep an animal happy by satisfying all its physical needs. But in the case of man, spiritual and psychological factors are as important as physical ones. Different governments following a similar course in providing for the material welfare of the public might achieve differing results because one of them fulfils the psychological needs of the society while the other does not.

One of the pivotal factors which contribute to the securing of the goodwill of the masses is the way a government views them, if it regards them as its slaves, or as its masters and guardians, if it considers the people as possessing legitimate rights and itself only as their trustee, agent and representative. In the first case, whatever service a government may perform for the people is not more than a kind of the master's care of his beast. In the second case, every service performed is equivalent to the discharging of duty by a right trustee. A State's acknowledgment of the authentic rights of the people and avoidance of any kind of action that implies negation of their right of sovereignty, are the primary conditions for securing their trust and goodwill.

The Church and the Right of Sovereignty

At the dawn of the modern age, there was a movement against religion in Europe which also affected, more or less, other regions outside

Christendom. This movement was inclined towards materialism. When we examine the causes and roots of this movement, we discover that one of them was the inadequacy of the teachings of the Church from the viewpoint of political rights. The Church authorities, in addition to some European philosophers, developed an artificial relationship with and an association between belief in Allah on the one hand and stripping the people of their political rights by despotic regimes on the other.

Naturally, this led to the assumption of some necessary relationship between democracy on the one hand and atheism on the other. It came to be believed that either we should choose the belief in Allah and accept the right of sovereignty bestowed by Him upon certain individuals, who have; otherwise,no superiority over others, or deny the existence of Allah so as to establish our right as masters of our own political destiny. From the point of view of religious psychology, one of the causes of the decline of the influence of religion was the contradiction between religion and a natural social need, contrived by religious authorities, especially at a time when that need expressed itself strongly at the level of public consciousness. Right at a time when despotism and repression had reached their peak in European political life and the people were thirstily cherishing the ideas of liberty and people's sovereignty, the Church and its supporters made an assertion that the people had only duties and responsibilities towards the State and had no rights. This was sufficient to turn the lovers of liberty and democracy against religion, against God in general and the Church in particular.

This mode of thought, in the West as well as in the East, was deeply rooted from ancient times. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in the Social Contract, writes the following: "We are told by Philo, the Emperor Caligula argued, concluding, reasonably enough on this same analogy, that kings were gods or alternately that the people were animals."

During the Middle Ages, this outlook was revived again. Since it assumed the status of religious faith, it induced a rebellion against religion itself. Rousseau, in the same book, writes the following: "Grotius denies that all human government is established for is the benefit of the governed, and he cites the example of slavery. His characteristic method of reasoning is always to offer fact as a proof of right. It is possible to imagine a more logical method, but not one more favorable to tyrants. According to Grotius, therefore, it is doubtful whether humanity belongs to a hundred men, or whether these hundred men belong to humanity, though he seems throughout his book to lean to the first of these views, which is also that of Hobbes. These authors show us the human race as

divided into herds of cattle, each with a master who presents it only in order to devour its members.[59]

Rousseau, who calls such a right "the right of might"(right equals force), replies to this logic in this fashion: "Obey those in power. If this means yielding to force, the precept is sound but superfluous; it has never, I suggest, been violated. All power comes from God, I agree; but so does every disease, and no one forbids us from summoning a physician. If I am held up by a robber at the edge of a forest, force compels me to hand over my purse. But if I could somehow contrive to keep the purse from him, would I still be obliged in conscience to surrender it? After all, the pistol in the robber's hand is undoubtedly a power."[60]

Although he does not incline to Allah in his totalitarian logic, the basis of the philosophic status of Hobbes, whose views have been referred to above, regarding political rights is that the sovereign represents and personifies the will of the people, and he actually translates the will of the people itself into his actions. However, when we closely examine his reasoning, we find that he has been influenced by the ideas of the Church. Hobbes claims that the individual liberty does not clash with the unlimited power of the sovereign. He writes the following: "Nevertheless, we are not to understand that by such liberty, the sovereign power of life and death is either abolished or limited. For it has been already shown that nothing the sovereign representative can do to a subject, on whatever pretense, can properly be called injustice or injury because every subject is the author of every act the sovereign does, so that he never wants right to anything; otherwise, than as he himself is the subject of Allah and is bound thereby to obscene the laws of nature. And, therefore, it may and does often happen in commonwealths that a subject may be put to death by the command of the sovereign power and yet neither do the other wrong—as when Jephtha caused his daughter to be sacrificed; in which, and the like cases, he that so dies, had the liberty to do the action for which he is nevertheless without injury put to death. And the same hold also in a sovereign prince that puts to death an innocent subject. For though the action be against the law of nature as being contrary to equity,

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[59]Jean Jacques Rousseau, *the Social Contract* (trns. by Maurice Granston), Penguin Books, 1978, p. 51.

[60]*Ibid.* p. 53.

as was the killing of Uriah by David, yet it was not an injury to Uriah but to God."[61]

As can be noticed, in this philosophy, the responsibility to Allah is assumed to negate the responsibility towards the people. Acknowledgment of duty to Allah is considered sufficient in order that the people may have no rights. Justice, here, is what the sovereign does and oppression and injustice have no meaning. In other words, duty to Allah is assumed to annul the duty to man, and the right of Allah overrides the rights of men. Indubitably, Hobbes, though apparently a free thinker independent of the ideology of the Church, had ecclesiastical ideas not penetrated into his mind, would not have developed such a theory. Precisely that which is totally absent from such philosophies is the idea that faith and belief in Allah should be considered conducive to the establishment of justice and the realization of human rights. The truth is that, firstly, the belief in Allah is the foundation of the idea of justice and inalienable human rights; it is only through the acceptance of the existence of Allah that it is possible to affirm innate human rights and uphold true justice as two realities independent of any premise and convention; secondly, it is the best guarantee for their execution in practice.

Nahjul-Balagha: the Approach

The approach of Nahjul-Balagha to justice and human rights rests on the above-mentioned foundations. In sermon 216, from which we have quoted before, Ali (ع) says the following: "Allah has, by entrusting me with your affairs, given me a right over you and awarded you a similar right over me. The issue of rights, as a subject of discourse, is inexhaustible but is the most restricted of things when it comes to practice. A right does not accrue in favor of any person unless it accrues against him also, and it does not accrue against him unless that it also accrues in his favor."

As can be noticed from the above passage, Allah is central to Ali's statement about justice, rights, and duties. But Ali's stand is opposed to the aforementioned view according to which Allah has bestowed rights on only a handful of individuals solely responsible to Him, and has deprived the rest of people of these rights, making them

[61]Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, the Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1958, p. 173.

responsible not only to Him but also to those who have been granted by Him the unlimited privilege to rule others. As a result, the ideas of justice and injustice with regard to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled become meaningless.

In the same sermon, Ali (ع) says the following: "No individual, no matter how eminent and high his station in religion maybe, is not above needing cooperation of the people in discharging his obligations and the responsibilities placed upon him by Allah. Again, no man, however humble and insignificant in the eyes of others, is too low to be ignored for the purpose of his cooperation and his providing assistance."

In the same sermon, Ali (ع) asks the people not to address him in the way despots are addressed: "Do not address me in the manner despots are addressed [i.e. Do not address me by the titles used to flatter despots and tyrants]. In your attitude towards me, do not entertain the kind of considerations that are adopted in the presence of unpredictable tyrants. Do not treat me with affected and obsequious manners. Do not imagine that your candor would displease me or that I expect you to treat me with veneration. One who finds it disagreeable to face true and just criticism would find it more detestable to act upon it. Therefore, do not deny me a word of truth or a just advice."

Rulers are People's Trustees, Not Masters

In the last chapter, we said that a dangerous and misleading view became current in the thought of some modern European thinkers interlinking in an unnatural fashion the belief in Allah on the one hand and the negation of peoples' rights on the other. This correlation played a significant role in inducing a group to incline towards materialism. Duty and responsibility to Allah was assumed to necessarily negate the duty and responsibility to the people. The Divine obligations completely displaced human obligations. The belief and faith in Allah (Who, according to the Islamic teachings, created the universe on the principles of truth and justice) was considered to be in conflict with and contradict the belief in innate and natural human rights, instead of being regarded as their basis. Naturally, belief in the right of people's sovereignty was equated with atheism.

From the Islamic point of view, the case is actually the reverse. In Nahjul-Balagha, which is the subject of our discussion, the main topics are: tawhid and "irfan; throughout, the talk is about Allah Whose Name

occurs repeatedly everywhere in its pages. Nevertheless, it not only does not neglect to discuss the rights of the people and their privileges vis-a-vis the ruler, in fact regarding the ruler as the trustee and protector of their rights, but also lays great emphasis on this point. According to the logic of this noble book, the imam/ruler is the protector and trustee of the rights of the people and is held accountable by them. If one is asked as to which of them exists for the other, it is the ruler who exists for the people, not vice versa. Sa`di has a similar idea on his mind when he says the following: "It is not the sheep who are to serve the shepherd; it is the shepherd who is there for their service.

The word raiyyah (lit. herd), despite the fact that it gradually acquired an abominable meaning in the Persian language, has an original meaning which is essentially good and humanitarian. The word rai for the ruler and raiyyah for the masses first appears in the speech of the Prophet (ص) and is literally used thereafter by Ali (ع).

This word is derived from the root raa, which carries the sense of "protection" and "safeguarding."The word raiyyah is applied to the people for the reason that the ruler is responsible for protecting their lives, property, rights, and liberties.

A tradition related from the Holy Prophet (ص) throws full light on the meaning of this statement: "Truly, everyone of you is a rai responsible for his raiyyah. The ruler is the rai of his people and is responsible for them; the woman is the rai of her husband's house and is responsible for it; the slave is the rai of his master's property and is responsible for it; indeed, each of you is a rai and is responsible [for those under his charge/care]."[62]

In the preceding pages, we cited some examples from Nahjul-Balagha which illustrate Ali's outlook regarding the rights of the people. Here we shall give sample quotes from other sources, beginning with the following verse of the Holy Quran:

Allah commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners, and that when you judge between the people, judge with justice. (4: 58)

Commenting on this verse, al-Tibrisi, in his exegesis Majma al-Bayan, remarks thus: "There are several opinions regarding the meaning

[62]Bukhari, *Kitab al-Nikah*, Vol. 8.

of this verse. Firstly, that it is about trusts in general, including the Divine and the non-Divine, the material and the non-material trusts; secondly, that it is addressed to the rulers, and that Allah, by making the returning of the trusts [to their rightful owners] an obligation, is commanding such rulers to observe the rights of the people.

Then he further adds the following:

This is corroborated by the verse immediately following it: O believers, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. (4: 59)

According to this verse, people are bound to obey the commands of Allah, His Messenger and those in authority (wulat al-amr). While the preceding verse mentions the rights of the people, this one reiterates the complementary rights of those in authority. It has been related from the Imams that AOne of these two verses is ours (i.e. it establishes our rights in relation to you), and the other is yours (i.e. it outlines your rights in relation to us). Imam al-Baqir (ع) said that the salat, zakat, sawm, and hajj are some of the trusts (mentioned in 4: 58). One of the trusts (amanat) is that the wulat al-“amr have been commanded to justly distribute the ghanaim, sadaqt and whatever belongs to the people.

In the exegesis Al-Mizan, in the part of the commentary upon this verse which deals with tradition, the author relates a tradition from Al-Durr al-Manthur from Ali (ع) that he said, “It is incumbent on the imam to rule according to the decrees revealed by Allah and to carry out the responsibilities with which he has been entrusted. When he does that, it is incumbent upon the people to pay attention to the Divine command (about obeying the wali al-amr), to obey him and to respond to his call.

As noted earlier, the Holy Quran considers the ruler, the head of the State, as a trustee and a guardian; it regards just government as a fulfillment of a trust entrusted to the ruler. The approach of the Imams (ع), in particular that of Amir al-Mu’minin Ali (ع), corresponds with the view which can be inferred from the Holy Quran.

Now that we know the Holy Quran’s view of this matter, we may go on to examine the statements of Nahjul-Balagha dealing with this issue. More than anything else, we must study Ali’s letters (epistles) to his governors, especially those which were meant to be official circulars. It is in these letters that we would find glimpses of the teachings of Islam

regarding the functions of the ruler and his duties towards the people as well as their rights. Ali (ع), in his letter to the governor of Azerbaijan, reminds him of his duties towards the people in these words: "Beware lest you should consider this assignment as a bait [for acquiring personal gain]; rather, it is a trust lying on your neck. You have been charged with care-taking [of the people] by your superior [obligation towards them]. It is not for you to betray your duties with respect to the people (ra'iyyah)" (Epistle 5).

In another letter written as a circular to tax collectors, after a few words of advice and admonition, Ali (ع) says the following: "Fulfill the demands of justice in your relationship with the people and be patient in matters regarding their needs because you are treasurers of the people (ra'iyyah), representatives of the community (umma), and envoys of your imams"(Epistle 51).

In the famous epistle to Malik al-Ashtar, which contains elaborate instructions about various aspects of government, he writes the following: "Awaken your heart to kindness and mercy for the people (ra'iyyah) and love and tenderness for them. Never, never should you ever act with them like a predatory beast which seeks to be satiated by devouring them, for the people fall into two categories: They are either your brethren in faith or your kindred in creation. Do not ever say, 'I have been given authority' or 'My command should be obeyed' because it corrupts the heart, consumes one's faith, and invites calamities."

In another letter sent as a circular to his army commanders, he says the following: "It is an obligation that an official should not behave differently with the people (ra'iyyah) on account of distinction which he receives or material advantage that he may achieve. Instead, these favors from Allah should bring him nearer to Allah's creatures and increase his compassion towards his brethren."(Epistle 50)

Ali (ع) shows an amazing sensitivity to justice, compassion towards the people and a great respect for them and their rights which, as reflected in his letters, is an exemplary and unique attitude towards this issue.

There is another epistle in Nahjul-Balagha which consists of instructions to the collectors of zakat, and is entitled: "To the officials assigned to the job of collecting zakat."The title indicates that it was not addressed to any particular official but sent either as a general instruction

in writing or delivered as a routine oral instruction. Sayyid ar-Radi has included it in the section of Epistles, or letters, with the clarification that he is placing this letter here to show to what extent Ali (ع) was meticulous in matters pertaining to justice and the rights of the people, being attentive not only to main points but also to minute details. Here are Ali's instructions: "Set out with the fear of Allah, Who is One and has no partner. Do not intimidate any Muslim. Do not trespass upon his land so as to displease him. Do not take from him more than Allah's share in his property. When you approach a tribe, at first come down at their watering place, stay there instead of entering their houses. Approach them with calm dignity and salute them when you stand among them, grudge not a proper greeting to them. Then say to them, "O servants of Allah! The Wali and Khalifah of Allah has sent me to you to collect from you Allah's share in your property. Is there anything of His share in your property? If there is, return it to His Wali. A If someone says 'NO, do not repeat the demand. If someone answers in the affirmative, go with him without frightening, threatening, or compelling him. Take whatever gold and silver he gives you. If he has cattle or camels, do not approach them save with his permission because the major part belongs to him. When you arrive (into the cattle enclosure), do not enter upon them in a bossy and rude manner."Epistle 25, also see 26, 27 and 46)

The passages quoted above are sufficient to throw light on Ali's attitude as a ruler toward the people under his rule.

Moral Lectures and Aphorisms

Inimitable Moral Teaching

Moral and spiritual teachings constitute the greater part of Nahjul-Balagha, making up almost half of the book. More than anything else, the fame of Nahjul-Balagha is due to the sermons, exhortations and aphorisms on ethical and moral subjects.

Aside from the moral teachings of the Holy Quran and a number of the sermons and sayings of the Holy Prophet (ص), which are to be considered the source and antecedent of Nahjul-Balagha, the teachings of Nahjul-Balagha are without a match in the Arabic and Persian languages. For more than a thousand years, these sermons have played an influential role serving as a matchless source of inspiration, yet retaining their original power to quicken the heartbeat, to sublimate emotions, and to bring tears to the eyes. It seems that as long as there remains any trace of humanity in the world, these sermons shall continue to exercise their original power and influence.

Comparison

The literature of Arabic and Persian is replete with works containing spiritual and moral teachings of the highest sublimity and elegance, though mainly in the form of poetry. There is, for example, the famous qasida by Abul-Fath al-Busti (360-400/971-1010) which begins with the verse saying:

Worldly profit and achievement is loss,
And the gain unmarked by the seal of pure goodness...

There is also the eulogizing qasida by Abul-Hassan al-Tihami, which he wrote on the early death of his youthful son; it begins with these lines:

The law of fate governs the destiny of creation,
And this world is not a place to settle in.

Everyone of these works is an everlasting masterpiece of its kind and shines like a star on the horizons of the Arabic literature of the Islamic era, never to lose its freshness and charm. In Persian, the Gulistan

and the Bustan of Sa`di and his qasa'id serve as unusually attractive and effective means of moral advice and are masterpieces of their own kind. To give some examples, here are some famous verses of the Gulistan which start with:

Every breath is a fraction of life gone,
And when I see, not much of it does remain.

Or in another qasida where he says the following:

O people! The world is not a place for leisure and repose;
To a wise man, it is not worth the effort to possess.

Or, at another place, he says the following:

The world on water and life on wind do rest;
Salute the brave ones who to them do not tie their hearts.

... And he also says the following:

Time and fortune are subject to endless change;
The wise man doesn't attach his heart to the world.

Sa`di's Bustan is full of profound and glowing spiritual pieces of advice and, perhaps, it is at its best in the ninth chapter on Penitence and the Right Way. The same is true of some portions of the Mathnawi of Rumi and works of all other Persian poets from whom we shall not further quote any examples.

In Islamic literature, including the Arabic and the Persian, there exist excellent examples of spiritual counsels and aphorisms. This Islamic literary genre is not confined to these two languages but is also found in Turkish, Urdu and other languages. A characteristic spirit pervades all of them. Anyone familiar with the Holy Quran, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (ص), of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع), of the other Imams, and of Muslim saints of the first rank can observe a characteristic spirit pervading all Persian literature containing spiritual counsel which represents the spirit of Islam embodied in the Persian language and embellished with its charm and sweetness.

If an expert, or a group of experts, in Arabic and Persian literature acquainted with the works in all other languages that reflect the spirit of Islam were to collect the masterpieces in the field of spiritual counsel, the

extraordinary richness and maturity of the Islamic culture in this field will be revealed.

It is strange that as far as the works on spiritual counsel are concerned, the Persian genius has mostly expressed itself in poetry; there is no such work of eminence in prose. All that exists of it in prose is in the form of short sayings, like the prose writings of the Gulistan, a part of which consists of spiritual counsels and is in itself a masterpiece, or the sayings ascribed to Khawajah `Abdullah al-Ansari.

Of course, my own knowledge is inadequate, but as far as I know, there does not exist in Persian prose any remarkable work, except for short sayings, not even a passage, which is long enough to be counted as a short discourse, especially a discourse which was originally delivered extempore and later collected and recorded in writing.

There are discourses which have been related from Rumi or Sa`di meant as oral moral advice to their followers; they also by no means possess the brilliance and charm of the poetic works of those masters and definitely are not worth being compared with the discourses of Nahjul-Balagha.

The same can be said about the writings which have reached us in the form of a treatise or letter, such as the Nasihat al-Muluk by Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, the Taziyaneh-ye suluk by Ahmed al-Ghazali, the latter being an elaborate epistle addressed to his follower and pupil A`Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani.

Spiritual Counsel and Wisdom

Moral counsel, according to the Holy Quran, is one of the three ways of invitation towards Allah (hikma, mawiza, al-jidal al-hasan, i.e. wisdom, good admonition, and honorable debate, as mentioned in 16: 125).

The difference between hikma (wisdom, philosophy) and mawiza (spiritual and moral advice and admonition) lies in the fact that hikma is for instruction and imparting knowledge, while mawiza is meant for reminding. Hikma is struggle against ignorance and maw`iza is struggle against negligence and indifference. Hikma deals with the intellect and mawiza appeals to the heart. Hikma educates, while mawiza prepares the intellect for the employment of its reserves. Hikma is a lamp and maw`iza is an eye-opener. Hikma is for ratiocination, while mawiza is for self-

awakening. Hikma is the language of the intellect, while mawiza is the message for the spirit. Accordingly, the personality of the speaker plays an essential role in mawiza, which is not the case with hikma. In hikma, two minds communicate in an impersonal manner. But in mawiza, the situation is like the passage of an electric charge that flows from the speaker, who is at a higher potential, to the listener.

For this reason, it has been said of mawiza that: "If it comes forth from the soul, then it necessarily alights upon the heart. Otherwise, it does not go beyond the listener's ears. It is about the quality of mawiza that it is said: "The speech which originates from the heart enters another heart, and the words which originate from the tongue do not go beyond the ears."

It is true that the words that come from the heart, being the message of the soul, invade other hearts; but if they do not convey the message of the soul, they are no more than empty literary devices which do not go beyond the listener's ear-drum.

Mawiza and Khitaba (Exhortation and Oratory)

Mawiza also differs from khitaba (oratory, rhetoric). Although oratory also deals with emotions, it seeks to stir and agitate them. Maw`iza, on the other hand, is intended to pacify emotions, and it seeks to bring them under control. Oratory is effective when emotions are inert and stagnant; mawiza is required when lusts and passions become unmanageable. Oratory stirs the passion for power and glory, the feelings of honor, heroism, chivalry, manliness, patriotism, nobility, righteousness, virtue and service; it is followed by movement and excitement. But mawiza checks inappropriate passion and excitement. Rhetoric and oratory snatch control from the hands of calculating reason, handing it over to tempestuous passions. But mawiza appeases the tempests of passions and prepares the ground for calculation and foresight. Oratory draws one to the outside while mawiza makes him turn to his inner self.

Rhetoric and counsel are both necessary and essential, and Nahjul-Balagha makes use of both of them. The main thing is to judge the right time for the use of each of them. The impassioned speeches of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) were delivered at a time when it was necessary to stir up passions and to build up a tempest to destroy an unjust and oppressive structure, such as at the time of the Battle of Siffin when Ali (ع) delivered a fiery speech before the engagement with Muawiyah's forces.

Muawiyah's forces, arriving ahead of Ali's army, had taken control of the river bank and stopped the supply of water to Ali's camp. At first, Ali (ع) strived to abstain from resorting to force, desiring the problem to be solved through negotiation. But Muawiyah, who had some other designs, considering occupation of the river bank a victory for himself, refused every offer of negotiation. When things became difficult for Ali's men, it was time when he should stir the emotions of his soldiers through a fiery speech, creating a tempest that would rout the enemy. This is how Ali (ع) addressed his companions:

> They are eager that you should make them taste the flavor of battle. So you have two alternatives before you: either submit to disgrace and ignominy, or quench your swords' thirst with their blood and quench your own thirst with water. It is death to survive through defeat, while true life is to die for the sake of victory. Muawiyah is leading a handful of deluded insurgents and has deceived them by keeping them in the dark about the truth, with the result that their throats are the targets of your deadly arrows.[63]

These words flared their emotions, provoked their sense of honor and made the blood surge in their veins. It was not yet sunset before Ali's companions had seized the river bank, throwing back Muawiyah's forces.

However, Ali's mawaa'iz were delivered in different circumstances. During the days of the first three caliphs, particularly during "Othman's rule, immeasurable amounts of wealth and booty, won through consecutive victories, flowed into Muslim hands. Due to the absence of any careful programs for correct utilization of that wealth, particularly due to the aristocratic, or rather tribal, rule during the reign of "Othman, moral corruption, worldliness, and love of comfort and luxury found their ways into the Muslim society. Tribal rivalries were revived, and racial prejudice between Arabs and non-Arabs was added to it. In that clamor for worldliness and mounting prejudices, rivalries, and greed for greater share of the war booty, the only cry of protest charged with spiritual exhortation was that of Ali (ع).

God willing, we shall discuss in the coming chapters the various themes dealt with in Ali's mawaiz, such as taqwa (piety), worldliness, zuhd (asceticism), desires, the dread of death, the dreads of the Day of

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[63] *Nahjul-Balagha, Khutab*, No. 51 pp. 88-89.

Judgement, the need to take lesson from the history of past nations and peoples... etc.

Nahjul-Balagha's Recurring Themes

Out of the 241 fragments collected under the title AKhutab by Sayyid ar-Radi (though not all of them are Khutab or sermons), about 86 can be classified as mawaiz or at least contain a series of spiritual pieces of advice. Some of them, however, are elaborate and lengthy, like khutba 176 which opens with the sentence Avail yourselves of the Divine expositions, the khutba named al-Qasia (which is the longest sermon in Nahjul-Balagha), and the khutba 93 (called Akhutbat al-muttaqin, the "sermon of the pious").

Out of some seventy-nine passages classified as epistles, letters (which not all of them are), about twenty-five, either completely or partially, consist of spiritual and moral teachings. Some of them are quite lengthy and elaborate, such as letter 31, which constitutes of Ali's advice to his son Imam al-Hassan al-Mujtaba (ع), and the lengthiest of all, except the famous directive sent to Malik al-Ashtar. Another is letter 45, the well-known epistle of Ali (ع) to Othman ibn Hunayf, his governor over Basra.

The Themes in Spiritual Pieces of Advice

Various themes are found in the spiritual pieces of advice of Nahjul-Balagha: taqwa (piety); tawakkul (trust in Allah); sabr (patience, ortitude); zuhd(asceticism); the renunciation of worldly pleasures and luxuries, the renunciation of inordinate desires and far-fetched hopes; the condemnation of injustice and prejudice, emphasis on mercy, love, helping of the oppressed and sympathy toward the weak; emphasis on the qualities of fortitude, courage, and strength; emphasis on unity and solidarity and condemnation of disunity; the invitation to take lesson from history; the invitation to thought, meditation, remembrance, and self-criticism; the reminders about the brevity of life and the swiftness of its pace; theremembrance of death; the hardships of death-throes; experiences of the life after death; the reminders of the dreadful events of the Day of Judgement, and so on. These are some of the frequent themes of the spiritual pieces of advice of Nahjul-Balagha.

Ali's Logic

In order to understand this aspect of Nahjul-Balagha, or, in other words, to understand Ali (ع) when he speaks as a moral and spiritual counsellor and to understand his didactic outlook, so as to draw benefit from that ever-flowing source, it is not enough to enumerate the various themes and topics dealt with by Ali (ع) in his discourses. It is not sufficient merely to remark that Ali (ع) has spoken about taqwa, tawakkul or zuhd; rather, we must see what significance did he attribute to these words. We must uncover his didactic philosophy regarding the development of the human character and his perception of the human aspiration for piety, purity, freedom, and deliverance from spiritual servitude and thraldom. As we know, these are words employed by all-in particular those who are wont to play the role of a moralist; but all individuals do not mean the same kind of things by these terms. Sometimes, the meanings one person attributes to these words are quite contrary to those meant by another, and naturally lead to conclusions which are quite opposite.

Consequently, it is essential to elaborate somewhat the specific meanings of these terms in Ali's vocabulary, starting with taqwa.

Taqwa

Taqwa is one of the most frequent motifs of Nahjul-Balagha. In fact it would be hard to find another book which emphasizes this spiritual term to the extent of this book. Even in Nahjul-Balagha, no other term or concept receives so much attention and stress as taqwa. What is taqwa?

Often, it is thought that taqwa means piety and abstinence and so implies a negative attitude. In other words, it is maintained that the greater the amount of abstinence, withdrawal, and self-denial, the more perfect is one's taqwa. According to this interpretation, taqwa is a concept divorced from active life; secondly it is a negative attitude; thirdly, it means that the more severely this negative attitude is exercised, the greater one's taqwa would be. Accordingly, the sanctimonious professors of taqwa, in order to avoid its being tainted and to protect it from any blemish, withdraw from the bustle of life, keeping themselves away from involvement in any matter or affair of the world.

Undeniably, abstinence and caution exercised with discretion is an essential principle of wholesome living. For, in order to lead a healthy

life, man is forced to negate and affirm, deny and posit, renounce and accept, avoid and welcome different things. It is through denial and negation that the positive in life can be realized. It is through renunciation and avoidance that concentration is given to action.

The principle of tawhid contained in the dictum la ilaha illa Allah is at the same time a negation as well as an affirmation. Without negation of everything other than Allah it is not possible to arrive at tawhid. That is why rebellion and surrender, kufr (unbelief) and iman (belief), go together; that is, every surrender requires a rebellion and every faith (iman) calls for a denial and rejection (kufr), and every affirmation implies a negation. The Holy Quran says the following:

So whoever disbelieves in taghut and believes in Allah, has laid hold of the most firm bond. (2: 256)

However, firstly, every denial, negation, rejection, and rebellion operates between the limits of two opposites; the negation of one thing implies movement towards its opposite; therejection of the one marks the beginning of the acceptance of the other. Accordingly, every healthy denial and rejection has both a direction and a goal, and is confined within certain definite limits. Therefore, a blind practice and purposeless attitude, which has neither direction nor a goal, nor is confined within any limits, is neither defensible nor of any spiritual worth.

Secondly, the meaning of taqwa in Nahjul-Balagha is not synonymous with that of "abstinence', even in its logically accepted sense discussed above. Taqwa, on the other hand, according to Nahjul-Balagha, is a spiritual faculty which appears as a result of continued exercise and practice. The healthy and rational forms of abstinence are, firstly, the preparatory causes for the emergence of that spiritual faculty; secondly, they are also its effects and outcome.

This faculty strengthens and vitalizes the soul, giving it a kind of immunity. A person who is devoid of this faculty, if he wants to keep himself free from sins, it is unavoidable for him to keep away from the causes of sin. Since society is never without these causes, inevitably he has to go into seclusion and isolate himself. It follows from this argument that one should either remain pious by isolating himself from one's environment, or he should enter society and bid farewell to taqwa. Moreover, according to this logic, the more isolated and secluded a person's life is and the more he abstains from mixing with other people, the greater is his piety and taqwa in the eyes of the common people.

However, if the faculty of taqwa is cultivated inside a person's soul, it is no longer necessary for him to seclude himself from his environment. He can keep himself clean and uncorrupted without severing his relations with society.

The former kind of persons are like those who take refuge in mountains for fear of some plague or epidemic. The second kind resemble those who acquire immunity and resistance through vaccination and so do not deem it necessary to leave the city and avoid contact with their townsfolk. On the other hand, they hasten to the aid of the suffering sick in order to save them. Sa`di is alluding to the first kind of pious in his Gulistan, when he says the following:

Saw I a sage in the mountains,
Happy in a cave, far from the world's tide.
Said I, AWhy not to the city return,
And lighten your heart of this burden?
He said, "The city abounds in tempting beauties,
And even elephants slip where mud is thick.

Nahjul-Balagha speaks of taqwa as a spiritual faculty acquired through exercise and assiduity, which on its emergence produces certain characteristic effects, one of which is the ability to abstain from sins with ease.

I guarantee the truth of my words and I am responsible for what I say. If similar events and experiences of the past serve as a lesson for a person, then taqwa prevents him from plunging recklessly into doubts.[64]

Beware that sins are like unruly horses whose reins have been taken way and which plunge with their riders into hell-fire. But taqwa is like a trained steed whose reins are in the hands of its rider and enters with its rider into Paradise.[65]

In this sermon taqwa is described as a spiritual condition which results in control and command over one's self. It explains that theresult of subjugation to desires and lusts and being devoid of taqwa degrades one's personality making it vulnerable to the cravings of the carnal self.

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[64]*Ibid. Khutab* 16.

[65]*Ibid.*

In such a state, man is like a helpless rider without any power and control, whom his mount takes wherever it desires. The essence of taqwa lies in possessing a spiritual personality endowed with will-power, and possessing mastery over the domain of one's self. A man with taqwa is like an expert horseman riding a well-trained horse and who with complete mastery and control drives his tractable steed in the direction of his choice.

Certainly the taqwa of Allah assists His awliya' (friends) in abstaining from unlawful deeds and instils His fear into their hearts. As a result, their nights are passed in wakefulness and their days in thirst [on account of fasting].[66]

Here Ali (ع) makes it clear that taqwa is something which automatically leads to abstention from unlawful actions and to the fear of Allah, which are its necessary effects. Therefore, according to this view, taqwa is neither itself abstinence nor fear of Allah; rather, it is a sacred spiritual faculty of which these two are only consequences:

For indeed, today taqwa is a shield and a safeguard, and tomorrow (i.e. in the Hereafter) it shall be the path to Paradise.[67]

In khutba 157, taqwa is compared to an invincible fortress built on heights which the enemy has no power to infiltrate. Throughout, the emphasis of the Imam (ع) lies on the spiritual and psychological aspect of taqwa and its effects upon human spirit involving the emergence of a dislike for sin and corruption and an inclination towards piety, purity, and virtue.

Further illustrations of this view can be cited from Nahjul-Balagha, but it seems that the above quotations are sufficient.

Taqwa is Immunity not Restraint

We have already mentioned some of the various elements found in the spiritual pieces of advice (mawa`iz) of Nahjul-Balagha. We began with taqwa and saw that taqwa, from the viewpoint of Nahjul-Balagha, is

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[66] *Ibid. Khutab* 114.

[67] *Ibid. Khutab,* No. 191.

a sublime spiritual faculty which is the cause of certain attractions and repulsions; i.e. attraction towards edifying spiritual values and repulsion towards degrading materialistic vices. Nahjul-Balagha considers taqwa as a spiritual state that gives strength to human personality and makes man the master of his own self.

Taqwa as Immunity

Nahjul-Balagha stresses that taqwa is for man a shield and a shelter, not a chain or a prison. There are many who do not distinguish between immunity and restraint, between security and confinement, and promptly advocate the destruction of the sanctuary of taqwa in the name of freedom and liberation from bonds and restraint.

That which is common between a sanctuary and a prison is the existence of a barrier. Whereas the walls of a sanctuary avert dangers, the walls of a prison hinder the inmates from realizing their inner capacities and from benefitting from the bounties of life. Ali (ع) clarifies the difference between the two, where he says the following:

Let it be known to you, O servants of Allah!, that taqwa is a formidable fortress, whereas impiety and corruption is a weak and indefensible enclosure that does not safeguard its people, and does not offer any protection to those who take refuge in it. Indeed, it is only with taqwa that the tentacles of sins and misdeeds can be severed.[68]

Ali (ع), in this sublime advice, compares sins and evil deeds which are afflictions of the human soul to poisonous insects and reptiles, and suggests that the faculty of taqwa is an effective defence against them. In some of his discourses, he makes it clear that taqwa not only does not entail restraint and restriction or is an impediment to freedom, but on the other hand it is the source and fountainhead of all true freedoms. In khutba 230, he says the following:

Taqwa is the key to guidance, the provision for the Hereafter, the freedom from every kind of slavery, and the deliverance from every form of destruction.

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[68] *Ibid*. *Khutab*, No. 157.

The message is clear. Taqwa gives man spiritual freedom and liberates him from the chains of slavery and servitude to lusts and passions. It releases him from the bonds of envy, lust, and anger, and this expurgates society from all kinds of social bondage and servitude. Men who are not slaves of comfort, money, power, and glory, never surrender to the various forms of bondage which plague the human society.

Nahjul-Balagha deals with the theme of taqwa and its various effects in many of its passages; but we don't consider it necessary to discuss all of them here. Our main objective here is to discover the meaning of taqwa from the point of view of Nahjul-Balagha, so as to unearth thereason for so much emphasis that this book places on this concept.

Of the many effects of taqwa that have been pointed out, two are more important than the rest: firstly, the development of insight and clarity of vision; secondly, the capacity to solve problems and to weather difficulties and crises. We have discussed this in detail elsewhere.[69] Moreover, a discussion of these effects of taqwa here will take us beyond our present aim which is to clarify the true meaning of taqwa. It will not be out of place to call attention to certain profound remarks of Nahjul-Balagha about the reciprocal relationship between the human being and taqwa.

Reciprocal Commitment

In spite of the great emphasis laid by Nahjul-Balagha on taqwa as a kind of guarantee and immunity against sin and temptation, it should be noticed that one must never neglect to safeguard and protect taqwa itself. Taqwa guards man, and man must safeguard his taqwa. This, as we shall presently explain, is not a vicious circle.

This reciprocal guarding of the one by the other is comparable to the one between a person and his clothes. A man takes care of his clothes and protects them from being spoiled or stolen, while the clothes in turn guard him against heat or cold. In fact the Holy Quran speaks of taqwa as a garment:

And the garment of taqwa -that is better. (7: 26)

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[69]See *Guftar-e-mah,* Vol. 1, the second speech.

Ali (ع), speaking about this relationship of mutual protection between a person and his tawqa, says the following: "Turn your sleep into wakefulness by the means of taqwa and spend your days in its company. Keep its consciousness alive in your hearts. With it wash away your sins and cure your ailments. Beware, guard your taqwa and place your self under its guard."[70]

At another place in the same sermon, Ali (ع) says the following:

"O Allah's servants, I admonish you to cultivate the taqwa of Allah. Indeed it is a right that Allah has over you and it is through it that you can have any right over Allah. You should beseech Allah's help for guarding it and seek its aid for [fulfilling your duty to] Allah."[71]

Zuhd (Asceticism) and Piety

Another spiritual motif conspicuous in the teachings of Nahjul-Balagha is zuhd, which after taqwa is the most recurring theme of the book. "Zuhd' means renunciation of the "world', and very often we encounter denunciation of the "world', and invitation and exhortation to renounce it. It appears to me that it forms one of the important themes of Nahjul-Balagha, which needs to be elucidated and explained in the light of various aspects of Ali's approach.

We shall begin our discussion with the word "zuhd' the words "zuhd' and "raghbah' (attraction, desire), if mentioned without reference to their objects, are opposite to each other. "Zuhd' means indifference and avoidance, and "raghbah "means attraction, inclination, and desire.

Indifference can be of two kinds: involuntary and cultivated. A person is involuntarily indifferent towards a certain thing when by nature he does not have any desire for it, as in the case of a sick person who shows no desire either for food, or fruits, or anything else. Obviously, this kind of indifference and abstinence has nothing to do with the particular sense implied in zuhd.

Another kind of indifference or abstinence is spiritual or intellectual; that is, things which are natural objects of desire are not

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[70] *Ibid. Khutab* 191.

[71] *Ibid*.

considered the goal and objective by a human being in the course of his struggle for perfection and felicity. The ultimate objective and goal may be something above mundane aims and sensual pleasures; either it may be to attain The sensuous pleasures of the Hereafter, or it may not belong to this kind of things. It may be some high ethical and moral ideal, like honor, dignity, nobility, liberty, or it may belong to the spiritual sphere, like the remembrance of Allah, the love of Allah, and the desire to acquire nearness to Him.

Accordingly the zahid (i.e. one who practises zuhd) is someone whose interest transcends the sphere of material existence, and whose object of aspiration lies beyond the kind of things we have mentioned above. The indifference of a zahid originates in the sphere of his ideas, ideals, and hopes, not in his physiological makeup.

There are two places where we come across the definition of "zuhd' in Nahjul-Balagha. Both of them confirm the above interpretation of zuhd. Ali (ع), in khutba 81, says the following:

O people! Zuhd means curtailing of hopes, thanking Allah for His blessings and bounties, and abstaining from that which He has forbidden.

In hikma 439, he says the following:

"All zuhd is summarized in two sentences of the Holy Quran: "Allah, the Most Exalted, says,. So that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you. [57: 23] Whoever does not grieve over what he has lost and does not rejoice over what comes to him has acquired zuhd in both of its aspects."

Obviously when something does not occupy a significant status among one's objectives and ideals, or rather is not at all significant in the scheme of things which matter to him, its gain and loss do not make the slightest difference to him.

However, there are some points that need clarification. Is zuhd, or detachment from the world, on which Nahjul-Balagha, following the Quranic teachings, puts so much emphasis, to be taken solely in an ethical and spiritual sense? In other words, is zuhd purely a spiritual state, or does it possess practical implications also? That is, is zuhd spiritual abstinence only or is it accompanied by an abstinence in practical life also? Assuming that zuhd is to be applied in practice, is it limited to abstinence from unlawful things (muharramat), as pointed out in khutba

81, or does it include something more, as exemplified by the life of Ali (ع) and before him bythe life of the Holy Prophet (ص)?

Proceeding on the assumption that zuhd is not limited to-muharramat only and that it covers permissible things (mubahat) as well, one may ask: what is its underlying rationale and philosophy? What is the use of an ascetic life that limits and confines life, rejecting its blessings and bounties? Is zuhd to be practiced at all times or only under certain particular conditions? Is zuhd-in The sense of abstinence from even permissible things-basically in agreement with other Islamic teachings?

Apart from this, the basis of zuhd and renunciation of the world is the pursuit of supra-material objectives and ideals. What are they from the point of view of Islam? In particular, how does Nahjul-Balagha describe them?

All these questions regarding zuhd, renunciation, and curtailing of hopes-themes which have so often been discussed in Nahjul-Balagha-need to be clarified. We shall discuss these questions in the following pages and try to answer them.

Islamic Zuhd and Christian Asceticism

In the last section we said that zuhd, as defined by Nahjul-Balagha, is a spiritual state that makes the zahid, on account of his spiritual and other worldly aspirations, indifferent towards the manifestations of material existence. This indifference is not confined to his heart, intellect, and feelings and is not limited to his conscience. It also manifests itself on the practical level of life in the form of simplicity, contentment, and obstention from hedonistic urges and love of luxuries. A life of zuhd not only implies that a man should be free from attachment to the material aspects of life, but he should also practically abstain from indulgence in pleasures. The zuhhad are those who in life are satisfied with the barest material necessities. Ali (ع) was a zahid, who was not only emotionally detached from the world but also indifferent to its pleasures and enjoyments. In other words, he had “renounced’ the “world’.

Two Questions

Here, inevitably, two questions shall arise in thereader’s mind. Firstly, as we know, Islam has opposed monasticism considering it to be

an innovation of Christian priests and monks.[72] The Prophet (ص) has stated in unequivocal terms that: "There is no monasticism (rahbaniyya) in Islam."

Once when the Prophet (ص) was informed that some of his Companions had retired into seclusion renouncing everything and devoting all their time to worship and prayer in seclusion, he became very indignant. He told them: "I, who am your prophet, am not such. In this way, the Prophet (ص) made them to understand that Islam is a religion of life and society, not a monastic faith. Moreover, the comprehensive and multi-faceted teachings of Islam in social, economic, political and moral spheres are based on reverence for life, not on its renunciation."

Apart from this, monasticism and renunciation of life are incompatible with the world-view of Islam and its optimistic outlook about the universe and creation. Unlike some other philosophies and creeds, Islam does not view the world and life in society with pessimism. It does not divide all creation into ugly and beautiful, black and white, good and evil, proper and improper, right and wrong. Now the second question may be stated in these words: "Aside from the fact that asceticism is the same as monasticism-which are both incompatible with the Islamic spirit-, what is the philosophy underlying zuhd ?"

Moreover, why should men be urged to practice zuhd? Why should man, seeing the limitless bounties of Allah and good things of life around him, be called upon to pass by the side of this delightful stream indifferently and without so much as wetting his feet? Are the ascetic teachings found in Islam, on this basis, later innovations (bid`a) introduced into Islam from other creeds like Christianity and Buddhism? And if this is correct, how are we to explain and interpret the teachings of Nahjul-Balagha? How can we explain the indubitable details known about the Prophet's life and that of Ali (ع)?

The answer is that Islamic zuhd is different from Christian asceticism or monasticism. Asceticism is retreat from people and society and seclusion for the purpose of worship. According to it, the life and works of the world are separate from the works of the Here-after and the one is alien to the other. One should, of necessity, choose either one of the

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[72]Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar,* Vol. 15, *Bab al-nahy an al-rahbaniyyah wa al-siyahah.* Rumi in the sixth part of his Mathnawi, refers to this tradition in the story of the bird and the hunter.

two. One should either devote oneself to worship of Allah which shall bear fruits in the Hereafter, or take up the life of the world and benefit from its immediate pleasures. Accordingly, monasticism is opposed to life and social relationships. It requires with-drawal from people and negation of responsibility and commitment towards them.

On the other hand, zuhd in Islam, though it requires a simple and unaffected life-style and is based on abstention from luxuries and love of comforts and pleasures, operates in the very midst of life and social relations and is sociable. It draws inspiration, and proceeds, from the goal of better fulfilment of social responsibilities and duties.

The conception of zuhd in Islam is not something that would lead to asceticism because a sharp distinction between this world and the next is nowhere drawn. From the viewpoint of Islam, this world and the next are not separable, not alien to each other. The relation of this world to the other is similar to that between the inward and outward sides of a single reality. They are like the warp and woof of a single fabric. They are to each other as the soul to the body. Their relation-ship can be assumed to be something midway between unity and duality. The works of this world and those of the next are interrelated similarly. Their difference is that of quality, without being essential. Accordingly, that which is harmful for the other world is also to one's detriment in the present world, and everything which is beneficial for the summum bonum of life in this world is also beneficial for life in the Hereafter. Therefore, if a certain work which is in accordance with the higher interests of life in this world is performed with motives that are devoid of the higher, supra-material, and transcendental elements, that work would be considered totally this-worldly and would not, as the Holy Quran tells us, elevate man in his ascent towards Allah. However, if a work or action is motivated by sublime aims and intentions and is executed with a higher vision that transcends the narrow limits of worldly life, the same work and action is considered "other-worldly."

The Islamic zuhd, as we said, is grounded in the very context and stream of life and gives a peculiar quality to living by emphasizing certain values in life. As affirmed by the Islamic texts, zuhd in Islam is based on three essential principles of the Islamic world-outlook.

The Three Essential Principles

Enjoyments derived from the physical, material, and natural means of life are not sufficient for man's happiness and felicity. A series

of spiritual needs are inbuilt in the human nature, without whose satisfaction the enjoyment provided by material means of life is not enough to make man truly happy.

The individual's felicity and happiness is not separable from that of society. Since man is emotionally bound to his society, and carries within him a sense of responsibility towards it, his individual happiness cannot be independent of the prosperity and peace of his fellow men.

The soul, despite its fusion and a kind of unity with the body, has a reality of its own. It is a principle in addition to the body which constitutes another principle in itself. The soul is an independent source of pleasure and pain. Like the body, or rather even more than it, it stands in need of nourishment, training, growth, and development. The soul, however, cannot dispense with the health and vigour of the body. At the same time, it is undeniable that total indulgence in physical pleasures and complete immersion into the delights of sensual experiences does not leave any opportunity for realizing the soul's unlimited possibilities. Therefore, there exists a kind of incompatibility between physical enjoyment and spiritual satisfaction. This is especially true if the attention and attachment to physical needs were carried to the very extreme of total immersion and absorption.

It is not true that all sorrow and grief are related to the soul and that all pleasures are derived from the body. In fact, the spiritual pleasures are much profounder, purer, and lasting than bodily pleasures. To sum up, one-sided attention to physical pleasures and material enjoyments finally results in compromising the total human happiness. Therefore, if we want to make our lives happy, rich, pure, majestic, attractive, and beautiful, we cannot afford to ignore the spiritual aspects of our being.

With due attention to these principles, the meaning of zuhd in Islam becomes clear. The knowledge of these principles allows us to understand why Islam rejects monasticism but welcomes a form of asceticism which is rooted in the very heart of life and in the context of social existence. We shall explain the meaning of zuhd in Islamic texts on the basis of these three principles.

The Zahid and the Monk

We said that Islam encourages zuhd but condemns monasticism. Both the zahid and the ascetic monk seek abstinence from pleasures and enjoyments. But the monk evades life in society and the responsibilities

and the duties it entails, regarding them as the low and mean facets of worldly existence, and takes refuge in mountains or monasteries. On the other hand, the zahid accepts society with its norms, ideals, duties, and commitments. Both the zahid and the monk are otherworldly, but the zahid is a social otherworldly. Also their attitudes to abstinence from pleasures are not identical; the monk disdains hygiene and cleanliness and derides married life and procreation. The zahid, on the contrary, considers hygiene and cleanliness, matrimony and parenthood to be a part of his duties. Both the zahid and the monk are ascetics, but whereas the "world"renounced by the zahid is indulgence and immersion in pleasures, luxuries, and comforts (he rejects the attitude which considers them to be life's ultimate goal and objective), the "world"renounced by the monk includes life's work and activity, and the duty and responsibility which go with social life. That is why the zahid's zuhd operates in the midst of social life, and is, therefore, not only compatible with social responsibility and commitment but is moreover a very effective means of discharging them.

The difference between the zahid and the monk arises from two different world-outlooks. From the viewpoint of the monk, this world and the next are two different spheres, separate from and unrelated to each other. To him, happiness in this world is not only independent of happiness in the next but is incompatible with it. He considers the two forms of happiness as irreconcilable contradictories. Naturally, that which leads to felicity and happiness in this world is considered different from the works and deeds which lead to success in the Hereafter. In other words, the means of acquiring happiness in this world and the next are regarded as being incompatible and contradictory. It is imagined that a single work and action cannot simultaneously be a means for acquiring happiness in both the worlds.

But in the world-view of the zahid, the world and the Hereafter are interconnected. The world is a preamble to the Hereafter. It is a farm of which the Hereafter is the harvest. From the zahid's viewpoint, that which gives order, security, uprightness, prosperity, and flourish to life is application of other-worldly criteria to the life of this world.

The essence of felicity and happiness in the other world lies in successful accomplishment of commitments and responsibilities of this world, performed with faith, piety, purity, and taqwa.

In truth, the zahid's concept of zuhd and the monk's rationale for his asceticism are incompatible and contradictory to each other. Basically,

monasticism is a deviation introduced by men into the teachings of prophets, due to ignorance or vested interests. Now we shall explain the philosophy of zuhd in the light of the teachings of the Islamic texts.

Zuhd and Altruism

One of the ingredients of zuhd is altruism. Ithar (altruism) and atharah (egoism) are derived from the same root. Atharah means giving precedence to one's interests over those of others. In other words it implies monopolizing everything for oneself and depriving others. But Ithar means preferring others over oneself and bearing hardship for the comfort and good of others.

The zahid, by virtue of his simple, humble, and content living, is hard upon himself so that others may live in ease. He sacrifices for the sake of the needy because with his sensitive heart which feels the pains of others he can relish the world's bounties only when there does not exist a single man oppressed by need. He derives greater satisfaction by feeding and clothing others and working for their ease than if he did those things for himself. He endures deprivation, hunger, and pain, so that others may be well fed and live without hardships.

Ithar represents the most majestic and sublime manifestation of human greatness, and only very great human beings climb to its noble heights.

The Holy Quran refers to the episode of The self-sacrifice of Ali (ع) and his honored family in the glorious verses of surat Hal Ata. Ali (ع), Fatima (ع), and their sons once gave away whatever they had-which was no more than a few loaves of bread-to the poor for the sake of Allah, and despite their own distress. That is why this story circulated among the angels and a verse of the Holy Quran was revealed in the praise of their act.

Once when the Holy Prophet (ص) came to visit Hadrat al-Zahra' (ص), observing that his daughter had put on a silver bracelet and hung a new curtain on the door, signs of unease appeared upon his face. Al-Zahra' (ع) was quick to discern the cause of her father's reaction. When the Prophet (ص) left, without losing time, she took out her bracelet and removing the curtain from the door, sent them to be carried to the Prophet (ص) so that he might give them to the needy. When al-Zahra's messenger

brought them to the Prophet (ص) he looked at them with amazement. He was glad that his daughter had taken the hint and foregone her simplest luxuries for the benefit of others.

"The neighbours first", was the maxim in the household of Ali (ع) and Fatima (ع). In khutba 193, which describes the qualities of the pious, Ali (ع) says the following: "The man of [taqwa] subjects his own self to hardships so that the people may live in comfort."

The Holy Quran describes the Ansar (Helpers), who in spite of their poverty welcomed the Muhajirun (the Emigrants) as their own brethren, giving them preference over their own selves, in these words:

They love whosoever has migrated to them, not finiding in their breasts any need for what they have been given, and prefer others above themselves, even though poverty be their lot. (59: 9)

Obviously, the altruistic ingredient of zuhd comes into play only under certain conditions. In an affluent society, altruism is less frequently required. But in conditions where poverty and deprivation are prevalent-as in the society of al-Medina during the Prophet's time-its need is greater. This is one of the secrets of the apparent difference of the life-styles of Ali (ع) and the Holy Prophet (ص) with the rest of the Imams.

In any case, zuhd with its underlying altruistic motives has nothing in common with monasticism and escape from society; instead it is a product of man's gregarious instincts and a manifestation of his noblest feelings, which reinforce the social bonds between fellow human beings.

Sympathy and Kindness

The sympathy and the willingness to share the suffering of the needy and the deprived is another ingredient of zuhd. When the destitute witness the luxuries and comforts of the richer classes, their anguish is multiplied. To the hardships of poverty and destitution is added the stinging feeling of deprivation and backwardness in relation to others.

Man, by nature, cannot tolerate to remain a silent spectator while others, who have no merit over him, eat, drink, enjoy and relish freely at the cost of his deprivation. When society is divided into haves and have-

nots, the man of Allah considers himself responsible. In the first place, as Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says, he should strive to change the situation which permits the gluttony of the rich oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, in accordance with the covenant of Allah with the learned men of the umma.[73] In the second place, he strives to ameliorate the state of affairs through altruism and self-sacrifice by sharing whatever he possesses with the needy and the deprived. But when he sees the situation deteriorating beyond reparation and it is practically impossible to alleviate the misery of the poor through sympathy, he practically shares their deprivation and tries to soothe their wounded hearts by adopting a life-style similar to that of the poor.

Sympathy with others and sharing their suffering is of essential importance especially in the case of the leaders of the umma on whom all eyes are fixed. Ali (ع), more than at any other time, lived a severely ascetic life during the days of his caliphate. He used to say: "Indeed Allah has made it obligatory for just leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of the poor class so that they do not despair of their distress.[74] Should I be content with being called Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) while refusing to share the adversities of the times with the people? Or should I be an example to them in the distress of life?"[75]

In the same letter (to `Othman ibn Hunayf), he says the following: "It is absolutely out of question that my desires should overpower me and my greed should lead me to relish the choicest foods while in Hijaz and Yamama there may be some people who despair of even a single loaf of bread and who do not get a full meal. Shall I lie with a satiated belly while around me are those whose stomachs are hungry and whose livers are burning?[76]

At the same time, Ali (ع) would reproach anyone else for practicing the same kind of asceticism in life. When faced with their objection as to why he himself practiced it, he would reply, AI am not like you. The leaders have a different duty. This approach of Ali (ع) can be observed in the conversation with "Asim ibn Ziyad al-Harith.[77]

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[73]This is a reference to to *Khutab* No. 3, p. 50.
[74]*Ibid. Khutab* 209.
[75]*Ibid. Khutab* 45.
[76]*Ibid.*

[77]*Ibid. Khutab* 209.

In Volume 9 of Bihar al-Anwar, it has been related from Al-Kafi that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said: "Allah has appointed me as the leader of the people and made it my duty to adopt a way of living, in food and clothing, on par with the poorest classes of the society so that, on the one hand, it may soothe the distress of the poor and, on the other, restrain the rich from rebellioning."[78]

An incident is related from the life of the great faqih Wahid Behbahani, may Allah be pleased with him. One day he observed one of his daughters-in-law wearing a garment made of a fabric usually worn by women of rich families of those days. He reproached his son (the late Aqa Muhammad Ismail, the lady's husband) in that regard. The son recited this verse of the Holy Quran in reply to his father's remarks: "Say: Who has forbidden the ornament of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good things of His providing?"(7: 32).

The father said: "I don't say that putting on good dresses, eating good food, and making use of Allah's bounties is forbidden. Not at all. Such restrictions do not exist in Islam. However, there is one thing to be remembered. We are a family charged with the duty of the religious leadership of Muslims and have special responsibilities. When the people of poor families see the rich live luxuriously, their frustration is aggravated. Their only consolation is that at least the Aqa's family lives like they do. Now if we, too, adopt the life-styles of the rich, that will deprive them of their only consolation. However, we cannot practically change the present social condition, but let us not grudge at least this much of sympathy."

As can be clearly seen, zuhd, which derives motivation from sympathy and readiness to share the sufferings of others, has nothing common with monastic asceticism. It is not based on escapism from the society. The Islamic concept of zuhd is a means of alleviating the sufferings of the society.

Zuhd and Freedom

Another ingredient of zuhd is love of freedom and independence. The union between zuhd and freedom is as primordial as it is indissoluble.

[78] *Bihar al-anwar* (Tabriz), Vol. 9, p. 758.

The dictates of need and exigency are the criteria of opportunists, whereas independence from want is characteristic of free men. The deepest aspiration of the free men unattached to the world is non-encumbrance, buoyancy, absence of hindrance and freedom of movement.

As a result, they adopt zuhd and contentment so as to reduce their wants to a minimum, thus liberating themselves from the bondage of need for things and persons.

The life of a human being, like that of any other [rational] animal, requires a series of natural and indispensable necessities like air, shelter, food, water and clothing. Man cannot free himself entirely from attachment to such needs and other things such as light and heat so as to make himself, in philosophical terminology, "self-sustaining"(muktafi bidhatih).

However, there are series of other wants which are not necessary and natural but are imposed upon one in the course of one's life either by oneself or by social and historical factors beyond his control, which nevertheless set limits upon his freedom. Such constraints are not very dangerous as long as they are not transformed into inner needs, such as certain political constraints and compulsions. The most dangerous of compulsions are those which emerge as inner needs from within one's own self to shackle him.

The mechanism of these needs which lead to inner weakness, impotence and defeat, operates in such a way that when one turns to luxuries and comforts in order to add charm, delight and glamour to one's life so as to feel more secure and strong in order to derive a greater gratification from life, one is impelled to possess more and more things. In the course of time, one gets gradually accustomed to and engrossed in the means of comfort, luxury and power. These habits gradually result in a deeper attachment to and love for those things, and he is bound to them with invisible bonds, thus becoming helpless and impotent in front of them. That is, the same thing which had once added charm and delight to his life later deprives his personality of its vigor, and the same thing which once made him feel powerful against nature now turns him into a helpless slave without a will of his own.

Man's inclination towards zuhd is rooted in his love of freedom. By nature, he is disposed toward possession of things and their exploitation. But when he realizes that the things, to the very extent they make him outwardly powerful and successful, inwardly transform him

into a weakling without a will-power and a slave, he rebels against this slavery. This rebellion of man is what we call zuhd.

Our poets and sages have spoken a lot about freedom and liberation. Hafiz calls himself "the slave of the magnanimity of the One Who is free of everything under the blue sky that carries any taint of attachment."Among the trees, he admires the cypress which to him seems Afree of all woes. What those great men meant by "freedom is freedom from attachment, freedom from being possessed, bewitched, and captivated by anything."

But freedom implies something greater than being devoid of attachments. The ties which make a man weak, helpless, dependent and impotent are not only those which originate in the heart or emotional attachments; to these must be added the various bodily, physical and psychological conditioning and artificial appendages that are first acquired for adding charm and glory to life and for the satisfaction of the lust for power and dominance, later growing into a form of addiction or rather becoming a second nature. These, while they may not involve one's emotional attachments or may even be regarded by one as reprehensible, should be counted as even stronger means of human servitude: They may bring an even greater degradation than emotional attachments do.

Take the example of an enlightened arif with a heart free of worldly attachments. For him, an addiction to tea, tobacco or opium has become a second nature. For him, abstention from foods to which he is accustomed may endanger his life. Can such a man lead a carefree life?

Liberty from attachments is a necessary condition of freedom, but it is not sufficient in itself. Getting used to a minimum amount of the niceties of life, an abstention from affluent living, is another condition of freedom.

The first thing to strike Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, one of the honored Companions, when describing the station of the Holy Prophet (ص), is the following: "The Prophet of Allah (ص) was able to manage with the minimum necessities of life."

Is it a merit to be able to do with a minimum amount of means? If we take only the economic aspect into view, we should say that the Prophet's level of consumption was quite low. In this respect, therefore, the answer would be: "No, not at all; it is not a significant merit. But if

viewed from a spiritual viewpoint, that is, when examined according to the criterion of one being free from the worldly bondage, we have to admit that it is a great merit indeed because it is only by acquisition of this merit that a human being can live with any measure of unfettered freedom and unimpeded mobility and participate in the incessant struggle of life with agility and vigor.

This matter is not restricted to habits involving the individual; binding one's self to social habits and customs, to modes and manners of dealing with people, the mesh of social connections and gatherings, adherence to styles and fashions in dress and demeanor... these and the like encumber life and deprive it of dynamism

Freedom of movement in the arena of life is like swimming: The lesser the interference and incumbrance for the swimmer, the greater is his ability to move around in the water. Too many attachments will not only deprive him of his mobility but bring him closer to the danger of drowning. Athir al-Din Akhsikati (d. 577 or 579/1181 or 1183) says the following:

To cross the river of life, shed your robes;
Nakedness is a condition of keeping afloat.

Farrukhi Yazdi says the following:

Of nakedness the sage does not complain,
A sword of good steel would not rust without a sheath.

Baba Tahir has a rubai which, though intended for some other purpose, is nevertheless relevant here:

O heart! Thy path is better when covered with thorns;
Your track is better when stretched on heavens high;
Nay! If thou can strip the skin off thine flesh,
Do it, for the lighter thy burden the better it be.

Sa`di, too, relates a relevant fable in chapter 7 of his Gulistan, although it also aims at some other purpose: "I saw a rich man's son squatting by the side of his father's grave and bragging thus before the son of a darwish son: 'My father's tomb is constructed of rare stones. Inside, it is paved with marble with inlaid turquoise. And look at your father's! An unbaked brick or two was/were fetched on which a handful of earth was thrown!'

"The sage's son heard these remarks and replied: 'Yet before your father is able to budge under the pile of those stones, my father would have already reached Paradise!'"

These are allegories underlining the significance of lightness and freedom from bondage, the essential condition for dynamism, nobility and nimbleness. Leaps, movements and struggles were achieved by individuals who were practically freer of bondage and attachments, that is, in some sense, they were zahids. Gandhi, with his ascetic mode of life, brought the British imperialism to its knees. In the words of Ya`qub Layth al-Saffar, Ghandi Adid not set aside his diet of bread and onions till he became a terror for the caliph. In our own times, the Vietcong fighterss were such an example. Their surprising power of resistance was drawn from what in Islamic idioms has been called "Alightness of provisions."A Vietcong fighter could sustain himself for days in his shelter with a handful of rice and continue his battle against the enemy.

Which leader, religious or political, living in luxury and comfort has brought about drastic upheavals in world history? Which monarch who, having founded a dynasty, transferred power from another family to his own, has been a lover of luxuries and comforts?

Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was the most free of all the world's free men. He was a free man in the complete sense of the word because he was a zahid in the most profound sense of the word. Ali (ع), in Nahjul-Balagha, lays great emphasis on renunciation of worldly pleasures and comforts as a means of liberation. In one of the hikam (aphorisms), he says the following: "Greed is everlasting slavery."[79]

In one of his sermons, he describes the zuhd of Jesus, the son of Mary (ع), in these words: "He was free of any abasing greed.[80]"In another place he says the following: "The world is a place of transit, not a place of abode. Its people fall into two categories: those who sell away their souls into slavery and those who ransom their souls and liberate them."[81]

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[79]*Nahjul-Balagha, Hikam,*No. 103.

[80]*Ibid. Khutab,* No. 160.

[81]*Ibid. Khutab,* No. 133.

In a letter to Othman ibn Hunayf, Ali (ع) is more explicit than elsewhere. Towards the end of the letter, addressing the world and its pleasures, he reveals to us the philosophy of zuhd and the secrets of renunciation thus: "O world! Get away from me! I have thrown your reins on your shoulders, have freed myself from your claws and released myself from your snares. Go, get away! By Allah, I shall not surrender to you so that you should abase me! I shall not follow you tractably so that you may control me and lead me wherever you please."

Yes. Ali's zuhd is a rebellion against abasement and indignity on account of life's pleasures. It is a rebellion against human weaknesses and impotence before the tyranny of desires. It is a defiance of servitude to the world and obsequiousness before its charms.

Zuhd And Spirituality; Zuhd, Love and Worship

Another fountainhead of zuhd and renunciation of hedonism is the aspiration to avail of spiritual bounties. Presently, we do not intend to undertake any argument to the effect that man and the universe possess an undeniable spiritual aspect. This is another story all by itself. It is evident that from a materialistic outlook of the world, the rejection of hedonism, materialism and love for money and wealth as a prerequisite for acquisition of spiritual virtues is devoid of any meaning.

We have, here, nothing to say about the followers of materialism as a school of thought. At present, we address only those who have experienced the aroma of spirituality. This is so because anyone who has smelled its fragrance knows that as long as one does not liberate himself from the bondage of desire, as long as the infant soul is not weaned away from the breasts of nature, and as long as the material aspects of life are seen as not being the ultimate end of life and are seen, instead, only as means, the domain of the heart is not ready for the emergence of chaste emotions, majestic thoughts and angelic feelings. That is why, it is said, that zuhd is the essential condition for exuberance of gnosis and is inalienably linked to it.

The worship of Allah, in its real sense, that is, the ardor of love, the zeal of devotion and service in the way of Allah, His constant presence in thoughts and His remembrance, the sense of delight and ecstasy in His adoration and worship... is not at all compatible with self-adoration, hedonist attitude and being captured by the glamour and charm of material things.

The need of zuhd is not characteristic solely of the worship of Allah; rather, every kind of love and adoration, whether it pertains to one's country, creed, conviction, or someone/something else, calls for some kind of zuhd and indifference towards the material aspects of life.

It is characteristic of love and adoration, as opposed to knowledge, science or philosophy, that they have to deal with the heart and, as such, they do not tolerate any rivals. Nothing prevents a scientist or a philosopher who is enslaved to money and wealth from devoting and concentrating his intellectual powers, when necessary, on the study of the problems of philosophy, logic, physics, or mathematics. But it is not possible, at the same time, that his heart should be full to the brim with love, especially love of a spiritual nature, such as love for humanity, for his religion or creed. Certainly, it cannot burn with the light of the Divine love nor can it receive an enlightenment or inspiration of a the Divine sort. Consequently, the essential condition for receiving the spiritual grace and the realization of true humanitarianism is the purging of the temple of the heart from every trace of materialistic attachments, the extermination from the Ka`ba of the heart of all the idols of gold and silver and of their destruction.

As we have said before, we should not be led to misinterpret freedom from the bondage of gold and silver and the indifference towards what these metals can be exchanged for as monastic asceticism which is an attempt to evade responsibility and commitment. Instead, it is only in the light of such zuhd that responsibility and commitment reacquire their real significance and are no longer empty words without content and but hollow claims. The personality of Ali (ع) is a glorious example. In him, zuhd and commitment were combined together. While he was a zahid who had renounced the world, he, at the same time, had a heart that was most sensitive to the demands of social responsibility. On the one hand, he used to say: "What has Ali to do with perishable niceties and short-lived pleasures?[82] On the other hand, a small injustice or the sight of someone in distress was enough to snatch sleep from his eyes for nights. He was ready to go to bed with an empty stomach lest someone in his dominion should remain hungry: "Shall I stuff my belly with delicious foods while in Hijaz and in Yamama there may be people who have no hope of getting a loaf of bread or a full meal?"[83]

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[82] *Ibid. Khutab,* No. 224.

[83] *Ibid. Epistle,* No. 45.

There was a direct co-relation between such zuhd of his and such sensitivity. Since Ali (ع) was a zahid, an unselfish man indifferent to the world, with a heart that overflowed with the exuberance of the love for Allah, he looked at the world, from the minutest particle to the greatest star, as a unit entrusted with responsibility and duty. This is why he was so sensitive towards the issues of social rights. Had he been a hedonist devoted to his own interests, he would never have been the responsible and committed person that he was.

The Islamic traditions are eloquent with regard to this philosophy of zuhd and Nahjul-Balagha lays particular emphasis upon it. In one particular hadith, it is related from Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (ع) that he said, "All hearts that harbor doubt or entertain shirk shall be inauthentic; that is why they adopted zuhd so that such hearts may be emptied and be prepared for the Hereafter."[84]

As can be seen from this tradition, every kind of hedonism and attachment to pleasures is considered as shirk and contrary to the worship of the One God, Allah. Rumi describes the zuhd of the A`arif in these words: "Zuhd means taking pains while sowing. Mystic knowledge (ma'rifa) is (care during) its cultivation; the arif is the soul of the Law and the spirit of taqwa. Mystic knowledge is the fruit of the labors of zuhd."

Abu Ali ibn Sina, in the ninth namat of his work Al-Isharat, which he devotes to the description of various stations of the mystics (maqamat al-`arifin), differentiates between the zuhd of the `arif and that of the non-`arif. He writes the following: "The zahids who have no knowledge of the philosophy of zuhd make a certain deal in their imagination: They barter the goods of the world for the goods of the Hereafter. They forego the enjoyments of the world so that they may enjoy the pleasures of the Hereafter. In other words, they abstain here in order to indulge there. But an aware zahid, one who is acquainted with the philosophy of zuhd, practices it because of his unwillingness to engage his inner self with anything other than Allah. Such a man, out of his self-respect, regards anything other than Allah to be unworthy of attention and servitude."

In another section of the same book, where he discusses spiritual discipline, Ibn Sina says the following: "This training has three ends in

[84]Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi,* Vol. 2, pp. 194-5.

view. First, the removal of impediments from the path towards Allah; second, the subjugation of the carnal self (al-nafs al-ammara) to the contented self (al-nafs al-mutma'inna), third, the refinement of the inward (batin)."

Then he proceeds to mention the effective means of realizing these three ends. He tells us that true zuhd helps in achieving the first of these objectives, that is, the removal of impediments, the non-God, from the way.

Contradiction Between the this World and the Hereafter

The problem of the conflict between this world and the Hereafter and the contradiction between them as two opposite poles, like the north and the south, which are such that proximity to the one means remoteness from the other, is related to the world of the human heart, of conscience, human attachment, love and worship. Allah has not given two hearts to man:

Allah has not assigned to any man two hearts within his breast. (Qur'ān, 33: 4)

With one heart, one cannot choose two beloved persons. That is why once when questioned about his old and worn-out clothes, Ali (ع) replied: "These make the heart humble, subdue the self [nafs] and induce the believers to emulate it."[85]

That is, those who have no new clothes to wear are not ashamed to put on old and worn-out clothes. They no longer suffer from humiliation on their account, for they see that their leader himself has not put on anything better. Then Ali (ع) goes on to add that the world and the Hereafter are like two irreconcilable enemies. They are two divergent paths. Anyone who loves the world and chooses its bondage is, by nature, led to loathe the Hereafter and detest everything that is related to it. The world and the Hereafter are like the east and the west, the north and the south. Anyone who approaches the one gets farther from the other. They are like two wives. In one of his epistles, he writes the following: "I swear by Allah that, if He wills, I shall so discipline my own self that it would rejoice to have a single loaf of bread and be content with only salt to season it. (In prayer) I shall empty my eyes of tears until they become like

[85] *Nahjul-Balagha, Hikam*, No. 103.

dried springs. The cattle fill their stomachs on the pasture and lie down to repose. The goats graze, devour green vegetation then enter their enclosures. Should Ali (ع) in a similar manner swallow whatever he can lay his hands on and lie down to doze? Congratulations! For, if he does that, after long years, he then has chosen to follow the grazing animals and the cattle led out to pasture."[86]

Then he goes on to add: "Happy is the man who fulfils his duties to Allah and overcomes hardships like a mill grinding the grain, who allows himself no sleep at nights, and when he is overpowered, he lies down on the ground with his hand as a pillow. He is accompanied by those who keep their eyes awake out of their fear of the Day of Judgement, whose bodies are ever away from their beds, whose lips constantly hum in the Master's remembrance, whose sins have been erased by prolonged supplications for forgiveness. They are the party of Allah; why, 'surely Allah's party are the ones who prosper' (Quran, 58: 22)".[87]

The two passages quoted above completely illustrate the relationship between zuhd and spirituality. To sum up, one has to choose one of the two paths; either to drink, eat, browse and hanker after sensual pleasures in utter indifference to the secrets of the spirit, to avoid the agonies of love and its tears, to speak not of enlightenment and progress, not to take a step beyond the threshold of bestiality... or to resolve on a journey into the valley of true humanity, towards the glory and exuberance of the Divine grace which descends upon chaste hearts and enlightened souls.

Zuhd: Minimum of Intake for Maximum Output

Some days ago, I was in Isfahan on a visit for a few days. During it, in a gathering of the learned, a discussion started about zuhd. The various aspects of it were scrutinized in the light of the multi-faceted teachings of Islam. Everyone wanted to find a comprehensive and articulate definition of zuhd. Among them, a learned high school teacher[88] who (I later came to know, that he was writing a treatise on the subject, the manuscript of which he showed me later) suggested a wonderfully

[86]*Ibid. Epistle,* No. 45.

[87]*Ibid.* 420.

[88]The person referred here is Akbar Parwarish.

eloquent definition of zuhd. He said: "Islamic zuhd is minimizing the intake and maximizing the output."

This definition fascinated me; I saw that it was in conformity with my own earlier understanding and the conclusions that I have drawn in the foregoing chapters. Here I, with the permission of that learned man, making a little amendment in his definition, would like to say the following: "Zuhd in Islam means drawing a minimum of intake for the sake of maximizing the output."

That is, there exists a relation between drawing as little as possible of material benefits of life on the one hand and aiming at maximizing one's output on the other. Human outputs, whether in the sphere of the actualization of one's potentials, whether on the level of emotion and morality, or from the point of view of individuals' role in social cooperation and mutual help, or from the aspect of realizing spiritual edification and refinement... all in all have a converse relationship to one's intake, consumption or acquisition of material benefits.

It is a human characteristic that the greater one's enjoyment of material benefits and indulgence in such things as pleasures, luxuries and affluence, the greater is one's weakness, indignity, impotence, sterility and impoverishment. Conversely, abstinence from indulgent and extravagant enjoyments of nature (surely within definite limits) refines and purifies the human nature, invigorates and strengthens two of the highest of all human powers: thought and will.

It is true only of animals that a greater benefit from the possibilities provided by nature contributes to their animal development and perfection. Even in animals, it is not applicable when we consider what is called the merits desirable in a beast. For example, sheep and cattle which are reared for in order to obtain a greater amount of meat, milk, or fleece, etc. should be given a greater attention and care and be well fed. However, this is not true of, say, a race horse. It is impossible for a common stable horse to show any good performance in a race. The horse which has to run and win races is given days or rather months of training with a controlled diet until its body becomes lean and nimble, shedding all its excessive fat, so that it can acquire the desirable agility and speed or the excellence of which it is capable.

Zuhd is also an exercise and discipline for man. But it is the exercise of the soul. Through zuhd, the soul is disciplined, shedding all

excessive appendages and becoming, as a result, light, agile and nimble, it takes an easy flight into the skies of spiritual merits.

Incidentally, Ali (ع) also describes taqwa and zuhd as exercise and practice. The word riyada originally meant exercising horses intended for racing. Physical exercise is also called riyada. Ali (ع) says the following: "Indeed, as to my self, I shall exercise it and discipline it through taqwa."[89]

What about plant life? Like animals, that which may be, loosely speaking, called the merit of a tree or a shrub is its capacity to thrive with a minimum amount of nourishment from nature. Ali (ع) also makes an allusion to this point in one of his letters to his governors. In that letter, after describing his own ascetic life-style, characterized by a minimum of consumption, Ali (ع) encourages him to emulate it. He says the following: "I can already anticipate your criticism. Someone might say that if this is what the son of Abu Talib eats, then weakness should have made him unfit for an encounter with the enemy's warriors. Remember the untended tree that thrives in the harsh conditions of the desert: its wood is firm and tough; even the fire lit from it is more enduring and fierce.

This law, which applies to all living things and beings, is more effective in the case of man because of the various characteristics special to him which are summed up under the term "human personality".[90]

The word zuhd, despite its sublime human meaning, has suffered an evil fate and is fiercely denounced particularly in our own times. Sometimes, the term is advertently or; otherwise, misinterpreted; sometimes, it is equated with sanctimoniousness and show of piety. At other times, it is considered equivalent to monasticism and ascetic seclusion. Everybody is free to coin terms of his own with any meaning of his own choice. But no one has the right to condemn any concept or term by imparting to it a wrong and misconceived meaning and sense. In its system of ethics and education, Islam has used a certain term, zuhd. Nahjul-Balagha and the Islamic tradition are replete with it. Before we make any judgement about zuhd in Islam, first and foremost, we must understand its Islamic connotation. The meaning of zuhd in Islam is what we have tried to explain and the philosophy behind it is what we have

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[89] *Ibid. Epistle* 45.
[90] *Usul-e-Iqtisad-e-Nuhsin, Shakl-e-arzish-e-pul.*

discussed in the light of Islamic texts. If anyone finds fault with this meaning and philosophy, let him inform me so that I, too, may benefit from it.

What school of thought and what kind of logic can justify monasticism? What school of thought can recommend and justify the worship of money, consumerism, love of goods, lust for status or, to use an expression which includes them all, worldliness? Is it possible for man to be the slave and prisoner of material things or, in the words of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع), Athe slave of the world and the slave of him who exercises control over it and yet speak of Ahuman personality?

Here, it would not be out of place to cite the views of a Marxist writer about the relationship between love for money and human personality. In a useful and concise book regarding capitalist and Marxist economies, he points out the moral consequences of the power of money in the society. He writes the following: "The extraordinary power of gold over our contemporary society is something deeply detested by men of sensitive nature. Men in search of truth have always expressed their strong aversion towards this filthy metal and consider it to be the main cause of corruption in contemporary society. However, those little round pieces of a shining yellow metal called gold are really not to be blamed. The power and domination of money as a general manifestation of power and authority of things over man is the essential characteristic of a disorderly economy based on barter and exchange. In the same way as the uncivilized man of ancient times adored and worshipped idols made with his own hands, the contemporary man also worships the product of his own labor. His life is overwhelmed by the power of things which he has made with his own hands. In order that the worship of consumer goods and the worship of money, which is the filthiest form evolved of idolatry, may be completely eradicated, the social causes which brought them into existence should be eliminated and the society should be so organized that the power and authority of the little coins of this yellow brilliant metal would be thoroughly obliterated. In such an organization of society, things will no more wield their present power over human beings. On the other hand, man's power and predominance over things shall be absolute and in accordance with a preconceived scheme. The worship of money and things shall then give place to honor and reverence for the human personality.

We agree with the author that the power of things over man, particularly the power of money, is opposed to the demands of human dignity and nobility and is as condemnable as idolatry. However, we do

not agree with his suggested exclusive prescription for solution of this problem.

Here we are not concerned with the question whether collective ownership is preferable from a social or economic point of view. Nevertheless, morally speaking, this suggestion, instead of redeeming society's spirit of honesty, it eliminates right away the very object of honesty!

Man can reclaim his identity only by liberating himself from the power of money and by bringing money under his own control. True human personality can emerge when the danger of money and goods remains possible without overcoming man, who is not ruled by them but rules them. Such a person is called by Islam zahid.

In the educational system of Islam, man regains his personality without the need to obliterate the right to own property. Those who are trained in the school of Islamic teachings are equipped with the power of zuhd. They strip money and goods of their power and subjugate them to their own authority.

Dunya : The World and Worldliness

Renunciation of Dunya in Nahjul-Balagha

Of the frequent themes of Nahjul-Balagha is strong warning against the dangers of worldliness. Our preceding discussion about zuhd (asceticism) and its aims also serves here to shed a light on the meaning of worldliness because zuhd, which is strongly enjoined, is the very opposite of the worldliness which is severely condemned. To define and explain any one of them is to define and explain the other. However, in view of the tremendous emphasis laid in Ali's moral sermons upon the warning against the dangers of worldliness, we consider it appropriate to devote a separate chapter to this topic with a view to further explaining this concept so that all ambiguities in this matter are removed.

The first point to be investigated is this: Why has so much attention been given to the concept of zuhd in the sayings and sermons of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) to the extent that no other issue has been so much underscored by him nor by the Holy Prophet (ص) nor has any other Imam spoken as repeatedly about the deceptions of worldly life, its ephemeral and temporal nature, the disloyalty of its slippery comforts and the dangers of wealth, affluence and immersion in and complete surrender to worldly pleasures and comforts?

The Danger Created by War Booty

This was not a matter of accident. Rather, it was something related to the conditions that came into existence during Ali's epochs, that is, during the days of the caliphs who preceded him, especially during the caliphate of Othman. A series of serious dangers visited the world of Islam in the wake of the influx of huge amounts of wealth and riches. Ali (ع) sensed its dangerous consequences and struggled against them. This struggle is reflected in his practices and policies during the period of his caliphate, in the course of which he ultimately gave up his life. This struggle, at the ideological level, is also reflected in his sermons, letters and sayings.

The Muslims were blessed with great victories in battles that diverted huge amounts of property and wealth into the Muslim world. However, instead of being utilized for public benefit or distributed justly

among the people, the wealth fell into the hands of a few individuals and an elite class. Especially during the days of `Othman, this imbalance became greatly pronounced. Individuals who possessed nothing only a few years ago appropriated for their own personal use fabulous amounts of wealth. This was the time when worldly tendencies gained momentum in the Muslim society: The Muslim umma started on a course of moral decline and degeneration.

It was following the awareness of this great danger to society that Ali (ع) raised his cry of protest to warn the umma of Islam. Writing about the days of Othman, al-Masudi says the following: "Othman was a man of extraordinary generosity (of course, it was exercised at the cost of the public treasury). The government officials and the people followed his example. He was the first among the caliphs to build a mansion of stone and mortar with wooden doors made of teak and juniper. He amassed other properties such as gardens, orchards and springs in Medina. When he died, there were 150,000 dinars and a thousand thousand (million) dirhams in cash with his treasurer. His property in Wadi al-Qura, Hunain and elsewhere was valued above 100,000 dinars. His legacy consisted of a large number of horses and camels."

Then he writes the following: "During his reign, a group of his associates also hoarded similar amounts of wealth. Al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam built a mansion in Basra which still stands intact in the year 332 H. [al-Masudi's own time]. It is also well known that he built similar mansions in Egypt, Kufa and Alexandria. When az-Subayr [ibn al-Awwam] died, he left 50,000 dinars in cash, a thousand horses and thousands of other things. The brick, mortar and teak mansion which Talhah ibn `Abdullah built in Kufa still exists and is known as Dar al-Talhatayn. Talhah's **daily** income from his properties in Iraq was one thousand dinars. He had one thousand horses in his stables. A one-thirty-second (1/32) part of the wealth that he left at his death was estimated at 84,000 dinars."

Al-Masudi mentions similar amounts of wealth in the possession of Zayd ibn Thabit, Ya`li ibn Umayyah and others. Evidently, such huge amounts of wealth do not emerge from under the ground nor fall from the sky. Such immense riches are never amassed except by the side of extreme and horrifying poverty. This is why Ali (ع), in sermon 129, after warning the people of the dangers of worldliness, says the following: "You live in a period when virtues recede and evils advance step by step and Satan becomes greedier in his eagerness to ruin human beings.

Today, his equipment have been reinforced, his traps are set in every place and his prey comes easily. Look around; you will see either a poor man hardly able to breathe in extreme poverty and penury, or a rich man who has transformed Allah's blessings into his own infidelity, or you will see a miser who makes stinginess in discharging the obligations imposed by Allah a means of increasing his own wealth, or you will find the rebellious whose unruly hearts are deaf to moral admonition. Where are the virtuous, the righteous among you? Where are the free men and the magnanimous? Where are those who avoid every trace of deceit in their dealings and pursue piety and honesty in their ways?

Intoxication of Affluence

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), in his utterances, has used the phrase sakarat al-ni'ma, meaning intoxication induced by comfort and affluence, which is inevitably followed by a vengeful disaster. In sermon 151, he warns them thus: "You, O people of Arabia, will be victims of calamities which are drawing near. Beware of the intoxication induced by affluence and fear the vengeful disaster which will follow it."

Then he describes the misfortunes caused by such immoderation. In sermon 187, he foretells the future calamities that were to befall the Muslim society. He says the following: "This will happen when you are intoxicated, not by drinking wine, but by wealth and affluence."

Yes, the flow of immense amounts of wealth into the coffers of the Islamic domain and the unjust distribution of this wealth, together with nepotism and partiality, infected the Islamic society with the disease of worldliness and the race for affluence.

Ali (ع) struggled to save the Islamic world from this grave danger. He was severely critical of those who were responsible for the infection to set in. He set an example of an altogether different life style in his own personal way of life and, on attaining caliphate, he gave the top priority to the campaign against these dangers in his revolutionary program.

General Aspect of Ali's Warnings

This prologue was intended to cast some light at the particular aspect of the warnings of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) against worldliness as a specific reaction to a particular social phenomenon of his time. Yet, aside

from this particular feature, there is a general aspect to Ali's words that is not confined to his own time and applies to all times and all people as an essential part of Islamic teachings. This specific logic emanates from the teaching of the Holy Quran which is followed up in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (ص), Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and the rest of Imams (ع), as well as in the writings of great Muslim sages. However, it is a logic which needs a detailed analysis. In the present discussion, our concern will be more with the general aspect of the discourses of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) in the sense that in them, Ali (ع) addresses himself to all human beings of all times.

Every School Has Its Own Terminology

Every school of thought has a terminology which is specific to it. In order to understand the concepts and issues of a certain school, it is essential to be familiar with its terms. On the other hand, in order to understand its particular terminology, it is necessary, in the first place, to understand its general view of the universe, life and man, that is, its Weltanschauung.

Islam has a clear view of being and creation. It has a particular way of looking at man and his life. One of the fundamental principles of the Islamic world outlook is the notion that there is no duality of any kind whatsoever in being; that is, the world of creation is not divisible into two domains of good and evil. That is, it is not true that some existent beings are good and beautiful and should have been created, whereas some others are evil and ugly and should not have been created but nevertheless exist. Such a view is regarded as kufr in the Islamic world outlook and is considered contrary to the principle of tawhid. According to Islam, the creation of all things and beings is based on goodness, wisdom and beauty: "You see no imperfection [whatsoever] in the creation of the all-Merciful One"(Quran, 67: 3).

"He knows the unseen and the seen, [He is] the Almighty, the all-Compassionate Who made everything He created good"(Quran, 32: 6-7).

Accordingly, Islam's condemnation of the world does not apply to the world of creation. The Islamic world outlook rests on the foundation of pure Tawhid and lays great emphasis on the Unity of the Acting Principle; it does not admit the existence of any partner who would share Allah's sovereignty. Such a world outlook can never be

pessimistic. The idea of an evil world abounding in crookedness and wickedness is not Islamic. Then why does it denounce the world?

Condemned World

Commonly, it is said that attachment to the world is condemned and disapproved by Islam. This is both true and false. If what is implied is an emotional attachment, it cannot be true because man, in relation to the total system of creation, has been created with a series of congenital emotional attachments and inclinations. In addition, he does not acquire these inclinations, nor are they superfluous or incongruous. Even as in the human body there is no superfluous organ—not even a single nerve ending—so also there are no redundant congenital tendencies of attachment in his nature. All innate human tendencies and aptitudes have a purpose which is wise and sagacious. The Holy Quran regards such tendencies as the signs of the Divine Wisdom and the Creator's consummate design: "And [some] of His signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses so that you may repose in them and He has set between you love and mercy"(Quran, 30: 21).

These attachments and sentiments form a series of channels of communication between man and his world. Without them, man would not be able to pursue the course of his development. Consequently, it should be said that the Islamic world outlook, even as it does not permit us to denounce and reject the world, it also does allow us to regard the natural attachments and the channels of communication as superfluous, useless and breakable because such sentiments and tendencies are a part of the general pattern of creation. In fact, the prophets and the awliya were endowed with these sentiments and emotions to a high degree of exuberance.

The truth is that what is implied by 'attachment to the world' are not these natural and innate inclinations; instead, what is meant is bondage to material and worldly things/affairs and total surrender to them, which leads to spiritual stagnation and inertia, depriving the human spirit of its freedom of movement and buoyancy and making it immobile and dead. This is what Islam calls worldliness and has severely campaigned against it as something contrary to the evolutionary system of creation. Not only this, Islam considers this struggle as being in tune with the laws of the evolutionary processes of creation. The expressions employed by the Holy Quran in this regard are miraculous, as we shall explain in the following sections.

Relationship Between Man and World

As made explicit in the last chapter, that which is disapproved by the Holy Quran and by Nahjul-Balagha is neither the world-in-itself, nor the natural and innate human urges and attachments. In the view of Islam, neither has the world been created without a purpose, nor has man strayed into it aimlessly.

There have been some schools of thought which view the world with pessimism. In their view, the existing order of the universe is far from being perfect. There have existed other schools which considered man's entry into the world of existence to be the result of some cosmic error, as if man had strayed into it! According to them, man is a total stranger in this world with which he has no ties of consanguinity and is a prisoner of existence. Like Joseph, he has been thrown into the black hole of being by his evil brethren where he is confined and his every endeavor should be aimed at finding an exit from such an abyss.

Obviously, when the relation of man to the world and nature is regarded as the one between a prison and its prisoner, an abyss in which one is entrapped; one's ultimate aim cannot be anything but seeking deliverance from it.

Logic of Islam

But from the Islamic viewpoint, the relation of man to the world is not that of a prisoner with his prison, or that of one entrapped in a well with the well. Rather, it is the kind of relation that exists between a peasant and his farm[91], or a horse and the racecourse[92], or a merchant and the marketplace[93], or a devotee and his temple[94]. The world, from the Islamic point of view, is a school for man, his training ground and the place where he can acquire perfection.

There is an anecdote narrated in Nahjul-Balagha of a man who condemned the world in Amir al-Mu'minin's presence. Ali (ع) rebuked him for his confusing the world which is condemned by Islam with the

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[91]This is a tradition of the Prophet (ص).

[92]This is in reference to a sentence from *Nahjul-Balagha*, *Khutab*, No. 28.

[93]This is in reference to a sentence from *Nahjul-Balagha*, *Hikam*, No. 131.

[94]*Ibid.*

actual physical world and informed him about his error[95]. Shaikh Farid al-Din Attar has rendered this incident into poetry in his Musibat nameh thus:

In the presence of the Tiger of Providence,
A man denounced the world with vehemence.
The world, exclaimed Hayder, is not to blame.
Wretched are you, being far from wisdom.
The world, son, is a farm To be tended day and night.
Whatsoever is of the honor and riches of faith,
And in all it is to be acquired from this world.
Tomorrow's fruit is the blooming of today's seed;
And one who is idle here shall taste the bitter fruit of regret.
The world is the best place for you,
Where in you can prepare provision for the Hereafter.
Go into the world, but do not get immersed in the ego.
And prepare yourself for the other world.
If you act thus, the world will suit you,
Hence, befriend the world just for this aim.

Nasir Khusrow Alawi, justifiably considered as a philosopher among the poets (hakim al-shu`ara'), is one of the most profound and truly religious among Persian poets. He has composed a praise about the world, simultaneously highlighting both the good and the evil qualities of it, which is as much in conformity with the Islamic outlook as it is extraordinarily beautiful from the artistic viewpoint. This praise appears in his collected poetical works (diwan) and is included in his book Jami' al-hikmatayn. He says the following:

O world! How apt and essential you are!
Even though you haven't been loyal to any.
Sick and wretched you appear to the afflicted eye,
Yet fine and healthy if one looks at your inside.
If sometimes you have broken a robust man or two,
Many a broken one you have joined and restored.
You are filthy to the unclean,
To the pure unstained.
If any one should blame you, say,
You know me not.
You have grown out of me.
If you are wise,

[95] *Nahjul-Balagha*, *Hikam*, No. 131.

Why blame the tree of which you are a branch?
The Master made me a path for your ascending journey,
And you have settled down on this lowly road.
Allah planted a tree from whose trunk you have grown;
If you grow out straight, you will be saved,
And if crooked, confined to the flames.
Yes, everyone burns crooked branches,
And asks not "Is it teak or walnut?"
You are the arrow of Allah aimed at His enemy,
Why have you hurt yourself with this weapon?!

Now it is evident that man's relation to the world is similar to the one that exists between the farmer and his field of cultivation, the merchant and the marketplace, the devotee and the temple. It is not possible for man to alienate himself from the world or sever his ties with it or develop a kind of relationship which is wholly negative. There exists a design and intelligent planning behind every natural urge. Man has neither come to this world by cheating or fraud, nor should he go from here cursed.

There is a general force of attraction and gravitation that encompasses the whole universe. All the particles in it attract each other according to a set pattern. This pattern of mutual attraction and absorption is determined by a judicious design. Moreover, the force of attraction and love is not confined to man alone. No particle in the universe is devoid of this power. The difference, however, is that man, contrary to other beings, is aware of his own leanings and inclinations.

Wahshi Kirmani says the following:

Every dancing particle is permeated with the same force of attraction
That draws it towards a certain specific goal.
It carries one Rower to the side of another,
And urges one spark to pursue the company of its likes,
From fire to wind, from water to dust,
From underneath the moon to the top of the heavens,
From flock to flock and from horde to horde,
You will observe this attraction in every moving thing
From heavenly spheres to the terrestrial bodies.

Accordingly, from the Islamic viewpoint, the world is neither without a purpose nor are the human beings created by any error, nor are man's innate tendencies undesirable and evil. Then what is meant by the

world that the Holy Quran and Nahjul-Balagha regard as undesirable and condemnable?

Before embarking on the issue, a few preliminary principles need to be clarified. It is characteristic of man that he is inherently an idealist and a lover of perfection. He is in pursuit of something with which he wants to develop a relationship closer than an ordinary attachment. In other words, he is by nature a devotee and a worshipper in search of something which is the ultimate object of his desire and the end of his entire being.

However, if he is not rightly guided, or not on his guard, his relationship with things and inclination towards them is transformed into a relationship of reliance and attachment, changing means into end and an association into bondage. As a result, his spirit of mobility, freedom and ability to pursue are transformed into inertia, complacence and captivity.

This is what is undesirable and contrary to the perfection-seeking order of the world. It is a defect and a kind of non-being, not a merit or a positive mode of a being. It is a dangerous malady and a disaster for man; the Holy Quran and Nahjul-Balagha warn against it.

Without any doubt, Islam does not regard the material world and life in it—even if it involves the greatest material achievements—as a fitting goal of man's highest aspirations. This is so because, firstly, from the Islamic world outlook, this world is followed by the eternal and everlasting world of the Hereafter where conditions of life will be determined by the deeds, good or evil, of a person in this world. Secondly, the value of a human being is too great to warrant his surrender to the slavery of and servitude to the material aspects of life.

This is why Ali (ع) so often points out that the world is a good place but only for one who knows that it is not a permanent abode, only a road, a caravanserai: "What a good abode it is for whoever would not want to make it a home!"[96]

"This world is, indeed, a transit camp, whereas the Hereafter is a place of permanent abode. So take from the transit what you need for your destination."[97]

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[96] *Ibid*. *Khutab*, No. 223.
[97] *Ibid*. *Khutab*, No. 203.

From the viewpoint of humanistic philosophies, there is no doubt that everything which binds man to itself and immerses him completely within itself violates his human identity by making it inert and frozen. The process of human perfection knows no limit nor end. Every halt, delay and bondage is injurious to it. As we find no reason to controvert this view, we accept it without any argument. However, there are two other points that need to be discussed here:.

Firstly, does the Holy Quran and following it Nahjul-Balagha confirm such a relationship between man and his world? Is it true that what the Holy Quran condemns is attachment and bondage to the world when taken as the ultimate end of life, an attitude which retards man's movement towards perfection and represents inertness, stagnation and non-being? Does the Holy Quran abstain from absolutely condemning worldly ties and sentiments so long as they do not become man's ultimate goal of life, stalling his progress?

Secondly, if it is admitted that human attachment to beings other than himself causes bondage and servitude and retards the development of human personality, does it make any difference if that being is Allah or someone/something else?

The Holy Quran negates every form of bondage and servitude and calls upon man to welcome every kind of spiritual and human freedom. It does not, however, condemn servitude to Allah; it does not invite man to liberate himself from Allah in order to acquire absolute freedom. Instead, the invitation of the Holy Quran is based on liberation from everything besides Allah and complete surrender to Him and only to Him. It is based on the rejection of obedience to anything except to Him and the acceptance of such a submission to Him.

The expression La ilaha illa Allah (There is no god except Allah) is the foundation of the Islamic faith. It implies simultaneously a negation and an affirmation, a rejection and an acceptance, kufr and iman. It signifies the negation, the rejection, the renunciation and the kufr in relation to the non-God, and the affirmation, acceptance, submission and iman in relation to Allah. The essential testimony required by Islam is neither just a AYes nor merely a ANo; it is a combination of both a "Yes"and a "No".

If the needs of the growth of the human personality demand that man should liberate himself from every kind of bondage, servitude and submissiveness to anything whatsoever, that he should rebellion against

everything that compromises his absolute freedom, that he ought to say No to everything—as the advocates of Existentialism claim—what difference does it make whether that "thing"is Allah or something else? And if it is to be decided that man should renounce his freedom and adopt slavery, servitude and submission to someone/something, what difference does it make, after all, whether it is Allah or someone/something else?

Is there a difference between accepting Allah as the supreme ideal and accepting some other thing as the Summum Bonum? Does it mean that only Allah is such that servitude to Him is freedom in itself and that losing of one's self in Him is identical with the realization of one's self and the recovery of one's true identity and personality? And if this is true, what is the basis of this claim? How can it be justified?

In our opinion, here we arrive at one of the most subtle, profound and progressive teachings of Islam and one of the most glorious of human ideologies. It is here that the sublimity of the logic of Islam and the insignificance and pettiness of other ideologies becomes evident. We shall answer these queries in the following sections.

The World in the Holy Quran and Nahjul-Balagha

In the last chapter, we said that what is execrable from the viewpoint of Islam with regard to man's relationship with the world is that it should grow to the extent of becoming a malady and an affliction of the human soul. It is the bondage and the enslaving attachment to the world against which Islam has waged an unrelenting struggle, considering it as undesirable, not the mere relationship with and attachment to it. It is the life of captivity that is condemnable, not the life of freedom. The world is rejected as a goal and objective, not as a way or a means.

If the relationship of man to the world develops into his servitude and subjugation, it leads to the negation and obliteration of all higher human values; man's worth lies in the greatness of his pursued ends and objectives. Obviously, if, for instance, his ultimate objectives do not go beyond filling his belly to satisfaction, and if all his efforts and aspirations were to revolve around his stomach, his worth will not surpass that of his stomach. That is why Ali (ع) says the following: "The worth of a man whose only aim is to stuff his belly is equal to that which is excreted from it.

The question is: What kind of relationship is appropriate between the human being and the world and what form should it have? In one kind of relationship, his personality is effaced and sacrificed to things, and since the worth of anyone in pursuit of an objective is lower than the objective itself, he is, to use a Quranic expression, bound to sink to the level of 'the lowest of the low' (asfal al-safilin), becoming thereby the most abject, degenerate and contemptible creature in the world. He, then, loses not only his higher values but also his human identity. In the other kind of relationship, the world and worldly things are sacrificed at the altar of his humanity and are used to serve man while he reclaims his higher ideals. This is why it has been said in one qudsi hadith:

> O son of Adam! I have created everything for your sake,
> But I have created you for My Own Self.

We have already cited two passages from Nahjul-Balagha indicating its status in denouncing the degenerate and distorted kind of relationship between man and the world of nature that leads to man's servitude and bondage. Here, we shall quote a few verses from the Holy Quran to endorse this viewpoint and return to Nahjul-Balagha for further relevant references.

The Quranic verses relevant to man and the world are of two kinds: The first group of verses is of an introductory nature; that is, it lays the ground for the second group of verses. In truth, the first group can be regarded as representing the major and the minor premises of a syllogism of which the second group constitutes the conclusion.

The first set of verses consists of those which emphasize the changeability, the inconstancy and the ephemeral nature of this world. In these verses, the reality of material objects is depicted as being changeable, fleeting and transitory. For instance, the world is compared to the vegetation that sprouts from the ground. In the beginning, it is green and flourishing, but little by little, it turns yellow; it shrivels and ultimately dries up. The n the elements break it into bits and scatter it into the wind. Such is life in the present world.

Obviously, whether man likes it or not, his physical life is not much more durable than that of the reed and is subject to a similar fate. If man must base his outlook on reality, not on fancy, and if it is only through the discovery of truth, not by flight of imagination and hallucinations, that he can hope to attain felicity and true happiness... then he should not forget this fact.

This set of verses constitutes a sort of a background argument for denying the importance of material things as ultimate ideals worthy of man's adoration. These verses are followed immediately by the reminder that man should know that there exists another world which is eternal and everlasting. Do not imagine that the present life is everything. Since it is not worthy of man, do not conclude that life is futile and meaningless, they remind.

The second set of verses illuminates the solution to the problem of man's relationship to the world. It can be clearly seen from these verses that the execrable form of relationship is one that grows to the extent of becoming a bondage, requiring man's submission, willing surrender and servitude to the transitory things of the world. It is in these verses that the crux of the Holy Quran's logic comes to light:

> Wealth and sons are the adornment of the worldly life; but the abiding things, the deeds of righteousness (which survive one's death and continue to benefit other people) are better with Allah in reward and better in hope. (Quran, 18: 46)

This verse, as can be seen, speaks of the ultimate aspiration of man. His ultimate aspiration is the thing for which he lives and without which life has no meaning in his eyes.

> Surely those who look not to encounter Us and are well-pleased with the present life and are at rest in it, and those who are heedless of Our signs, their refuge is the Fire, for that they have been earning. (Quran, 10: 7-8)

In this verse, that which is considered execrable is the absence of hope in the next life and the satisfaction and contentment with material things.

> So turn from him who turns away from Our remembrance and desires only the present life. That is [the extent of] their attainment of knowledge. (Quran, 53: 29-30)

> They rejoice in this world's life, and this world's life is nothing compared with the Hereafter but a temporary enjoyment. (Quran, 13: 26)

They know an outward part of the present life, but of the Hereafter they are heedless. (Quran, 30: 7)

There are many other verses which have a similar meaning. In all of them the same theme recurs, that is the negation of the world as the goal and ideal of man's highest aspirations and the ultimate object of his desire and the only source of his happiness and delight. It is held that this form of relationship between man and the world, instead of putting the world at man's disposal, sacrifices man to it and dispossesses him of his humanity.

In Nahjul-Balagha as in the Holy Quran we encounter a similar twofold argument. In the first set of statements the transitory nature of the world is depicted in profound, forceful metaphors, allegories and parables put in precise and elegant phrases which follow one another in an absorbing rhythm. In the second category, conclusions are drawn which are exactly the same as those derived by the Holy Quran.

In Khutbah 32, people are at first divided into two categories: The worldly and the otherworldly. The worldly people are again divided into four groups.

In the first group are put those who are meek and tractable like sheep. They are the most innocuous of creatures, never seen to commit any overt injustice or aggression, or covert deceit or subversion. Not that they detest such things but because they lack the power and daring to carry them out.

To the second category belong those who possess both the power and the daring to carry out such ambitions. They muster their will to amass money and wealth, to acquire power and authority, or to occupy important posts and offices and do not stop short of any degree of perverseness.

Those belonging to the third group are wolves in the skins of sheep. They are slaves of the world in the garb of the otherworldly and the pious. The y, sanctimoniously, hang their heads in affected humility, walk with the slow steps of a sage and dress like the devout. Through their hypocrisy they win the confidence of the people and become their most confident trustees.

To the fourth group belong those whose hearts burn regretfully with the fire of ambition but their feeling of inferiority has forced them to

retire to seclusion. They put on the dress of piety and zuhd in order to conceal their deep sense of inferiority and dejection.

All the four kinds of people, regardless of the diverse degrees of their success and failure, are regarded by Ali (ع) (A) to constitute, spiritually, a single class on account of their commonly shared attitude: worldliness. Why? Because all of them have one common characteristic: They are like the unfortunate birds whom the world has made its prey one way or another. Captured, they enjoy no longer the freedom of flight. They are slaves and prisoners of the world.

In the same sermon, Ali (ع) describes the qualities of the other-worldly, the opposite group and says the following:

Evil is the barter of those who purchase this world at the cost of their souls.

In the eyes of Ali (ع) the whole world with everything in it is too inferior to be the price of a man's humanity; hence it ends in the great loss of one who exchanges it for his human identity. Nasir Khusrow has the same theme in mind, when he says the following:

Never shall I fall an easy prey to the world,
For no more do its woes burden my heart.
In fact, I am the hunter and the world my prey,
Though once it did pursue me on its hunt.
Though many a man has fallen pierced by its arrows,
The world could not make me a target.
My soul flies over the world's tides,
And no more do I worry about its waves and tides.

This theme that one should never sacrifice one's humanity for anything in the world is a theme that recurs a lot in the sayings of the leaders of the Islamic faith. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع), in his famous will to Imam al-Hassan (ع), which is included in the section of Epistles (letters) in Nahjul-Balagha, says the following: "Keep your self above every contemptible thing because, whatever it may be, it is not worth the compromise of your self.

In Tuhaf al-Uqul, the following tradition is recorded:

Imam al-Sajjad (ع) was asked, "Who is the most important among people?" He replied, "The one who does not regard the whole world to be equal to his worth.

There are many traditions which deal with a similar theme, but we shall abstain from quoting more for the sake of brevity.

A close study of the Holy Quran, Nahjul-Balagha and the sayings of other religious leaders will reveal that Islam has not depreciated the world; rather, it has elevated the station and worth of the human being as compared to it. In Islam, the world is for the sake of man and not the other way around. It aims to revive the human values, not to disparage the world.

Freedom and Bondage

Our discussion of the meaning of "worldliness" in Nahjul-Balagha has become somewhat drawn out. However, one issue, which cannot be omitted, remains unanswered. We raised it earlier in the form of a question which we had promised to answer later. The question was this: If attachment and bondage to anything is a kind of unhealthy condition that leads to abandonment of human values and causes stagnation, inertness and inertia of the human personality, what difference does it make whether that thing is something material or spiritual, this worldly or otherworldly, or, as goes the saying, "the Master or the apple"? It may be said that if the aim of Islam, by prohibiting attachment and by warning against bondage to temporal things, is to safeguard the human being's identity, to rescue him from servitude and to protect him from stagnating and vegetating in life, it should have encouraged man to acquire absolute freedom and to consider everything that compromises and confines it as kufr, for such is the standpoint of some modern schools of philosophy which consider freedom to be the essence of man's human identity. These schools of thought equate man's human identity with his capacity to rebel, disobey every form of servitude and assert his absolute freedom. Accordingly, every manner of bondage, confinement and submission is, according to them, inconsistent with man's real identity and leads to self-alienation.

They say that man realizes his true humanity only by refusing to submit and surrender. It is characteristic of attachment that the object of love absorbs man's attention and compromises his self-awareness. This results in his forgetting his own self and, subsequently, this aware and

free being called man, whose identity is summarized in his awareness and freedom, becomes a slavish creature devoid of freedom and self-awareness. In forgetting his own identity, man also becomes oblivious of his human values. In such a state of bondage and servitude, he ceases to progress, edifying himself and becoming stagnant, frozen at some point. If Islam's philosophy of struggle against worldliness aims at the resurrection of the human identity and personality, it should oppose every form of servitude and liberate man from every form of bondage. Such, however, is not the case for Islam, undeniably, advocates the liberation from materialism for the sake of spiritual servitude. Freedom from the world is acquired for the sake of the fetters of the Hereafter and the apple is renounced for the sake of the Master.

The `Urafa' who advise absolute freedom from attachments, however, do allow an exception. Hafiz says the following:

I am the slave of the magnanimity of Him
Who is free of the taint of attachment to anything under the blue sky
Except the love of the moon-cheeked one,
The joy of whose love redeems all sorrows and woes.
Openly do I declare and am delighted to proclaim:
I am the slave of Love and am free from both the worlds
Except for the Beloved's Name inscribed on the slate of my heart,
The teacher did not teach me another word.

From the viewpoint of irfan, one must be free of both worlds but should surrender totally to love. As Hafiz says, the tablet of the heart must be clean of every name except that of the Beloved One. The heart should be cleansed of every attachment except the love of Allah Whose love brings redemption from all sorrows and woes.

However, from the viewpoint of the so-called humanistic philosophy, the freedom of the arif, being only relative, does not take us anywhere because it is freedom from everything for the sake of a total surrender and servitude to One Being. Servitude is, after all, servitude, and bondage is bondage, regardless of the agent towards which it is directed.

This is the objection raised by the followers of modern humanistic philosophies. In order that the issues involved may be further illuminated, we are compelled to refer to certain philosophical issues.

First of all, one may point out that to assume that there exists a kind of human selfhood and identity and to insist that this identity should be safeguarded in itself amounts to the negation of movement, progress and development of this selfhood because, motion and change necessarily result in alienation from this selfhood. This is so because movement means becoming: that is, becoming something one is not; it implies a continuous transcendence of selfhood and the embracing of otherness. Obviously, if we accept this view, it is only by the means of immobility and stagnation that one can preserve his identity. The development necessitates self-alienation. For this reason, some ancient philosophers defined motion in terms of otherness and self-estrangement. Accordingly, to assume that there exists a certain kind of human Aself and to insist that this self should be safeguarded and protected from becoming Anon-self and to speak of movement, progress and evolution in the same breath involves an unresolvable contradiction.

Some people, in order to free themselves from this contradiction, have said that man's identity lies in being devoid of any kind of self whatsoever. Man, they say, is a creature absolutely undefined in his essence and free from any kind of limit, form or essence. His essence lies in his being without any defined essence. Man is a creature devoid of a fixed nature and essential necessity. Any attempt to define, limit or confine him amounts to depriving him of his real self and identity.

Such a view may be aptly considered poetry and a flight of imagination rather than a philosophy. The absolute absence of a fixed form and essence is possible in one of two cases: Firstly, such a being should possess infinite perfection, pure and unlimited actuality; that is, it should be a being unlimited and unconfined, encompassing all times and places and predominant over all things and beings in existence, such as the Being of the Creator. For such a Being, movement and growth are impossible because motion and development involve overcoming of defects and imperfections, whereas such a being cannot possibly be supposed to possess any imperfection. Secondly, it may apply to a being devoid of every kind of actuality and merit. That is, it should be a pure possibility and sheer potentiality, a neighbor of nothingness, existing only on the remotest frontiers of existence. It should be devoid of any innate reality and essence though capable of assuming any form or essence. Such a being, which itself absolutely undefined, is always associated with a definite being; though shapeless and colorless in itself, it exists in the protective shadow of a being possessing form, shape and color. Such a being is what the philosophers call Athe primal matter. It occupies the lowest status in the hierarchy of existence and stands on the extremity of

being, even as the Divine Essence, being the absolute perfection, stands on the other extremity of existence—with the difference that the extremity occupied by the Divine Essence circumscribes all the contents of being. Man, like all other creatures, is situated somewhere between these two extremes and cannot lack any defined essence. Admittedly, he is different from other creatures but, unlike them, there is no limit to his movement towards perfection. Whereas other creatures remain confined to certain definite limits which they cannot transcend, there is no end to the possibilities of the human development.

Man possesses a special kind of being. But contrary to the view of the philosophers who believe in the precedence of essence and reduce the being of everything to its quiddity and who deny the possibility of transcendence and essential change as being self-contradictory and consider all changes to occur at the level of accidents, the existential nature of man, like that of any other material thing, is fluid, with the difference that its movement and fluidity know no final limits.

Some commentators of the Holy Quran, in their explanations of the verse: "O people of Yathrib! There is no abiding here for you (Quran, 33: 13), have generalized it to cover all humanity. They hold that man is a creature which does not move to a certain and definite stage or halt; the further he moves the greater are the possibilities open to him. Here we do not wish to indulge in discussing the legitimacy of imposing such interpretations on Quranic verses; we only intend to demonstrate that Muslim scholars have thought about man in such terms.

In the hadith about the Prophet's Ascension (al-mi`raj), Gabriel, who accompanies the Prophet (ص), at a certain point gives up his journey declaring: "I will get burnt if I move an inch further, while the Prophet (ص) leaves him behind and moves further."This is an allusion to the truth mentioned above.

Also, as we know, there is a debate among Muslim scholars about the salawat (Benedictions) upon the Holy Prophet (ص) and Ahl al-Bayt (ع), which we make as a prayer to Allah to shower greater blessings upon them. Now the debate is whether the salawat is of any benefit to the Holy Prophet (ص), who is the most perfect man. In other words, is there any possibility of ascension in the Prophet's station? Or does the salawat benefit only the person who pronounces it and beseeches Allah to bless the Prophet (ص), a favor that has already been granted?

The late Sayyid Ali Khan opened this debate in his commentary on Al-Sahifa Al-Kamila. A group of theologians believe that the Holy Prophet (ص) is always ascending and climbing higher and higher in his station and this movement is never halted.

Yes, such is the station of man. That which makes man as such is not the absolute absence of a defined essence but a certain kind of essence which is ordinarily referred to as the human nature and other such expressions.

Man does not have any ultimate limits, but he has a path. The Holy Quran lays a great emphasis on what it calls the Straight Path, which is an unambiguous path before man. Man is not constrained by stages so as to be forced to stop at every stage in his journey. Instead, there is an orbit in which he should move. This is the orbit of human perfection which is different from those of the animals. This means the movement in a specified orbit is orderly, not haphazard.

Existentialist Viewpoint

Existentialism has been rightly criticized for its refusal to acknowledge any kind of determination or definition of the human nature, for its considering every determination (even in the form of a path or an orbit) as contrary to his humanity and for its emphasis on his absolute freedom and capacity for rebellion. This philosophy necessarily leads to the breakdown of social morality and the negation of the individual's commitments and responsibilities.

Does Evolution Involve Self-Alienation?

Now, returning to what we said earlier, does movement and evolution necessitate alienation from one's self? Should every being, in order to remain itself, abstain from change and evolution? Does it mean that either man should retain his human identity or, if he chooses an evolutionary course, become something alien to his essence?

The answer is that the true evolution of anything is a movement towards the perfect state which conforms to its nature. In other words, the transformations during movement on the straight path of nature by no means necessitate any loss of a specific identity.

That which constitutes the real self of a being is its existence, not its essence. Accordingly, any change in essence does not imply mutation of the Aself' into a Anon-self. Mulla Sadra, who is the champion of this philosophy, holds that man does not have any definite essence; rather, every developing being passing through the stages of its evolution is not a single species but a plurality of species. The relationship of an imperfect being with its ultimate stage of perfection is not a relationship of otherness; rather it is a relationship of the thing to itself. It is the relation of an imperfect self to the perfect self. A thing while evolving toward its perfect state is in movement from its self to its self. In a sense, it can be said to be in movement from the non-self towards its true self. A seed that breaks the ground and sprouts leaves and sends out branches and flowers does not move from the self to the non-self. If it were aware of itself and aware of its ultimate evolution, it would not feel self-alienated.

This is why the love of true perfection is the love of a higher self; a praiseworthy love is in itself a desirable and praiseworthy egotism or self-love. Shaikh al-Ishraq Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi has an elegant ruba`i on this subject:

Beware lest you lose the wisdom's thread,
And lose your self for the sake of water and bread.
You are the traveller, the way, the destination,
Beware lest you lose the path from the self to the self.

On the basis of what has been said it can be surmised that there is a great difference between desiring Allah, the movement towards Allah, the love of Allah, the attachment and the servitude to Allah and submission to Him and the love, the submission and the servitude to other things. The servitude to Allah is freedom itself. It is the only relationship and tie which does not stagnate the human personality or make it inert and immobile. It is the only kind of worship which does not imply self-forgetfulness and self-alienation. Why? Because He is the Absolute Perfection, the Ultimate Goal and the Destination of everything in existence: "nd unto your Lord will be the end of all things (Quran, 53: 42).

Now we have reached a point from where we can proceed to explain the status of the Holy Quran that forgetting Allah is forgetting one's own self and the separation from Allah is absolute annihilation.

Forgetting and Losing the "Self"

I remember that about eighteen years ago, while discussing the exegesis of certain verses of the Holy Quran in a private gathering, for the first time the point struck me that the Holy Quran very often employs typical expressions about a certain group of human beings such as those who lose, forget, or sell their selves. For instance, it says the following:

They have, indeed, lost their selves [souls] and that which they were forging has gone astray from them. (Quran, 7: 53)

Say: "Surely the losers are they who lose their selves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. (Quran, 39: 15)

Be not as those who forgot Allah and so He caused them to forget their selves; those-they are the ungodly. (Quran, 59: 19)

The question might occur to a mind with a philosophic bent. Is it possible for a man to lose his self? The loss of anything necessitates two things: The loser and the thing lost. Now how is it possible for a human being to lose himself? Is this not self-contradictory?

Likewise, is it possible for a man to forget himself? A living human being is always immersed in itself and perceives everything as something other and additional to its own self; its attention is, before everything else, focused on itself. Then what is meant by forgetting one's self?

Later I realized that this matter occupies a significant place in Islamic teachings, especially in the prayers and some traditions as well as in the writings of Muslim Urafa. It shows that often man mistakes Anon-self' as his self, regarding non-self as his real self. Then, imagining the non-self to be his self, he treats the non-self and takes care of it as he would have treated and cared for his true self. The true self, as a result, falls into neglect and oblivion and occasionally undergoes a metamorphosis. For instance, when man imagines his body as representative of his total entity, all his endeavor revolves around his body, it means that he has forgotten his self conceiving the non-self to be his real self. Such a man, in the words of Rumi, is like the one who owns a piece of land somewhere; he carries building materials and hires masons and workers to build a house for him. After much toil, the house is made ready for living; the doors and windows are painted, the floor is carpeted, curtains are hung and the house is furnished beautifully in every way; however, one day, when he prepares to move into the new house, all of a sudden he realizes his mistake. To his dismay, he notes that instead of

erecting the house on his own land, he has constructed it on a land that belongs to someone else, while his own plot lies abandoned elsewhere:

Don't build your house on the land of another,
Work for your own self and toil not for the stranger.
Who is the stranger except your own earthen frame?
On whose account are all your sorrows and woes?
So long as you nurse and pamper your body,
The soul would not prosper, nor would it become sturdy.

At another, place Rumi says the following:

You, who have lost your self in a losing encounter,
Distinguishing not the other from your own true self;
At every shadow you are quick to exclaim:
Ah! This is me! By Allah it is not you!
Isolate yourself for a while from the crowd,
And immerse yourself to the neck in thought.
Indeed you shall find that you are one with the One,
Beautiful, serene and blessed is your self.

Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع) has a saying in this regard which is as profound as it is elegant: "I wonder at the man who searches for his lost things but doesn't care to recover his lost self [soul]."[98]

Losing oneself and forgetting oneself is not confined to man's error in recognizing his true identity and essence—such as the ordinary man's self-identification with the body, or the arif's occasional identification of himself with his barzakhi body. We have said in the last chapter that actually every being in the natural course of its development moves from the self to the self; that is, it moves from a lower, weaker self to a self which is powerful and higher. Accordingly, the deviation of every existent from the path of its perfection and development is the deviation from the self towards the non-self. Man, more than any other creature, being endowed with a free will and the freedom of choice, is subject to this deviation. By choosing a deviant objective as ultimate for himself, in reality he replaces his true self with the non-self, mistaking the non-self to be the self. It is on this basis that the human being's total immersion in material aspects of life has been regarded as condemnable.

[98]al-Amudi, *al-Shurar wa al-durar,* Vol. 4 p. 340.

Therefore, the adoption of devious goals and ends is one of the factors of self-alienation that leads man to forget his true self and finally to lose it.

Devious goals and objectives not only result in the disease of self-loss, they ultimately lead to the metamorphosis of man's human essence, a metamorphosis that is determined by that particular devious goal. A significant part of Islamic teachings is devoted to drive home the point that on the Day of Resurrection, every human being shall be resurrected together with the object of his love. Our traditions declare the following unequivocally:

Everyone, on the Day of Judgement shall be resurrected in the company of his object of love, whatever that may be, even if it is a stone.[99]

With attention to the indubitable and unequivocal Islamic teaching that on the Day of Judgement, man will be resurrected in the form of what he acquired in this world, it becomes clear that the reason for a person's resurrection together with the objects of his love is that the love and attachment for that object make it the ultimate goal of the path of his becoming. However devious that object may be, it causes the soul and the inner reality of a person to transform into it.

This subject has been given a great attention by Muslim sages and philosophers who have made great many interesting observations in this regard. For brevity's sake, we shall quote only one rubai on this topic: The seeker of a mine of diamonds is himself a mine; the seeker of the spirit is himself the spirit; I will divulge the secret of this matter: You are whatever you seek; you are the object of your quest.

Discovery of the Self and of Allah

The rediscovery of the self, in addition to the above two, requires to fulfil one more condition: The realization and knowledge of the cause of one's creation and existence. That is to say, it is impossible for man to recognize himself and know himself by viewing himself in separation from the cause of his creation. The real cause of every existent is prior to it and nearer to it than it is to its own elf: "And We are nearer to him than

[99] *Safinat ul Bihar*, under *hubb* (love).

his jugular vein"(Quran, 50: 16); "And know that Allah stands between a man and his heart"(Quran, 8: 24).

The Muslim mystics have laid a great emphasis on the point that the knowledge of the self (ma'rifat al-nafs) and the knowledge of Allah (ma'rifat Allah) are not separate from one another. To experience the spirit, which, according to the Holy Quran, is Allah's 'breath', is to experience the Divine Essence. Muslim mystics have raised severe objections against the statements of other Muslim philosophers regarding the problem of self-knowledge and consider them to be inadequate.

Shaikh Mahmud al-Shabistari was sent a series of diverse questions by someone from Khurasan. His poem Gulshan-e raz is the reply which he gave to those questions. In one of the questions, the inquirer asks:

Who am I?
Inform me about myself.
What is meant by AJourney within thy self?

The Shaikh's reply is elaborate. There, he says the following:

Forms and spirits, from the same light are derived,
Reflected of mirror or beaming from the lamp.
AI, the word, is everywhere in all your speech.
It refers to the soul, the spirit. "I"and "You"
Are greater than the body and the spirit,
Which are together parts of the self.
Go, then, my good man, first know well your self,
And remember: edema is different from robustness.[100]
Leave one of them to soar over the undulations of space and time,
Abandon the world in order to become a world in yourself.

A further elaboration of this theme will take us outside the scope of our present discussion. To be brief, it should be said that the gnosis of the self is inseparable from that of Allah. This is exactly the meaning of the famous saying of the Prophet (ص) and the same theme recurs in the

[100]This reference to the famous words of Ibn al-Arabi about one who imagines to have known themysteries of the self through the statement of the philosophers.

recorded statements of Imam Ali (ع): "He who knows his own self knows his Master.

In Nahjul-Balagha, it is reported that Imam Ali (ع) was asked by somebody: "Have you seen your God? Ali (ع) replied: "Would I worship what I have not seen?!"Then he elaborated on his answer thus: "He is not visible to the eyes but the hearts perceive Him through (the factual experience of) faith (iman)."[101]

An interesting point that is implicit in the verses of the Holy Quran is that man is in possession of himself as long as he "possesses" Allah. Only through the remembrance of Allah does he remember his self and become fully aware of it; to forget Allah is to neglect one's own self. Forgetting Allah is accompanied by self-forgetfulness: "Be not as those who forgot Allah, so He caused them to forget their own selves [souls]" (Quran, 59: 19).

Rumi, following the verses quoted above, says the following:

Even if the body should lie amidst fragrance and musk,
On death it will petrify and give out its stink.
So scent not the body, but perfume the soul with musk,
What is such musk but the Name of the Glorious Master?!

Hafiz says the following:
Hafiz, if you desire presence,
Do not be absent from Him.
If you desire His rendezvous,
Abandon the world and forget it.

This shows why the remembrance of Allah is essential for the life of the heart; it awakens and illumines the heart and gives peace to the soul; it revives, purifies, refines and humbles the human conscience and fills it with delight. How profound and beautiful are Ali's words in Nahjul-Balagha where he says the following: "Certainly Allah Almighty has made His remembrance a means for cleaning and polishing the hearts. It makes them hear after deafness, see after blindness, and it makes them submissive to guidance after being stubborn and resisting."In all periods and times, when there were no prophets, there were individuals to whom

[101] *Nahjul-Balagha*, *Khutab*, No. 179.

He whispered through their thoughts and spoke to their intellects. As a result, they were enlightened with an awakening in their hearts, vision and hearing.[102]

Worship and Rediscovery of the Self

There is so much that can be said about worship that if we were to elaborate, we would have to devote scores of chapters to this subject. Here, we shall make a brief reference to the value of worship in the rediscovery of the self.

As much as the bondage to material matters and immersion in them severs man from his true self and induces self-alienation, worship helps him in recovering his own self. Worship awakens man from his spiritual slumber. It rescues him from drowning in the sea of self-neglect and forgetfulness and saves his identity from being lapsed in the world of material things. It is in the mirror of worship and Allah's remembrance that man can observe himself as he really is and become aware of his failings and faults. It is in worship that he acquires the true perspective of being, life, space and time, like watching a city from a high mountain and perceives the insignificance, pettiness and abjectness of his materialistic hopes, desires and ambitions. It is in worship that a yearning is awakened in his heart to attain to the very core of being.

I have always marvelled at the following words of the famous scientist of our age, Albert Einstein. What adds to my amazement is that he was a physicist and a mathematician, not a psychologist, theologian or philosopher. After dividing religion into three stages, he calls the third stage of religious experience as the one arising from cosmic religious feeling. He describes this religious experience in these words: "The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought. Individual existence impresses him as a sort of prison and he wants to experience the universe as a single significant whole.[103]

William James, writing about prayer, says the following: "The impulse to pray is a necessary consequence of the fact that while the innermost of the empirical selves of a man is a self of the social sort, it yet

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[102] *Ibid*. *Khutab*, No. 222.

[103] A. Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (London 1973) based on *Mein Weltbild*; ed by Carl Seeling, p. 38.

can find its only adequate socius (its great companion) in an ideal world. Most men, either continually or occasionally, carry a reference to it in their breasts. The humblest outcast on this earth can feel himself to be real and valid by means of this higher recognition.[104]

Iqbal also has something profound to say about worship and prayer and their value for the rediscovery of the self. He writes the following: "Prayer as a means of spiritual illumination is a normal vital act by which the island of our personality suddenly discovers its situation in a larger whole of life.[105]

We conclude our discussion of this extensive subject right here.

Some Relevant Issues

Now that our discussion about the concept of the "world"[dunya] in Nahjul-Balagha is nearing its conclusion, I want to clarify some issues with attention to the principles discussed above.

Life in this World versus in the Hereafter

Some Islamic traditions seem to imply that there exists a kind of conflict between the world and the Hereafter. For instance, it is stated that they are like two rival wives who can never be reconciled, or it is said that they are like the East and the West: one cannot approach any of them without moving farther from the other. How should one interpret these statements in order to reconcile them with what has been said above?

The answer is that, firstly, as has been expressly stated in most Islamic traditions, a reconciliation between winning the world and the Hereafter is not only possible but is a necessity of the Islamic creed. That which is impossible is their reconciliation as ultimate ends and goals.

The enjoyment of the good things of the world does not necessarily require deprivation from the blessings of the Hereafter. That which deprives one of the rewards of the next life is a series of mortal sins, not the enjoyment of a wholesome, comfortable life and the availing of pure and lawful bounties provided by Allah. Similarly, that which leads to deprivation in the world is not taqwa or righteous deeds or the

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[104]Muhammad Iqbal, *The reconstruction of Religious Yought in Islam*, Lahore 1971, p. 89.

[105]*Ibid*. p. 90.

endeavor for the Hereafter; a number of other factors are responsible for it.

Many prophets, Imams and pious believers, whose virtues and piety are indubitable, have been among those who benefitted greatly from the legitimate bounties of the world. Accordingly, even if it is assumed that the religious texts do imply irreconcilability between the enjoyment of the world and that of the Hereafter, they would not be acceptable because of the incontrovertible testimony to the contrary.

Secondly, if we scrutinize such traditions closely, an interesting point comes to the surface in whose light we observe no contradiction between them and the incontrovertible principles of Islam. But before this point is explained, we should examine three possible relationships between the world and the Hereafter: "The relationship between enjoyment of the good things of the world and enjoyment of the rewards of the Hereafter. The relationship between the world as the ultimate goal and the Hereafter as such. The relationship between adoption of one of these as the ultimate goal with the enjoyment of the other."

There is no conflict whatsoever involved in the first case. Accordingly, a reconciliation between the two is quite possible. The second case, however, involves a contradiction. There is no possibility of reconciling these two opposite goals.

As to the third, it involves in turn two cases: first, the adoption of the world as the ultimate end and the enjoyment of the Hereafter; second, the adoption of the Hereafter as the ultimate goal and the enjoyment of the world. The first case involves a contradiction, whereas the second does not.

The Primary and the Secondary

The conflict between the adoption of either the world or the Hereafter as ultimate ends and the enjoyment of the other is the kind that exists between a perfect and an imperfect end. If the imperfect is made the ultimate goal, the perfect is necessarily missed whereas, if the perfect were one's end and goal, it would not necessarily preclude the imperfect. The same is true of anything primary in relationship to its secondaries. If something secondary were made as the aim, it would result in deprivation from the primary. But if the primary is made the aim and the goal, the secondary, being a corollary of the primary, is automatically included. This is most eloquently explained in Hikma 269 of Nahjul-Balagha:

There are two types of workers among the people of the world: (One type is represented by) the man who works in this world for this world, and his involvement in the world makes him forget the Hereafter. He is worried about those whom he shall leave behind (when he dies) lest poverty should strike them, as if he were himself secure of it (i.e. sure of not being poor in the Hereafter). So he spends his life for the (worldly) benefit of others [earning nothing for his own eternal life in the Hereafter]. The other type of man works in the world for the sake of the Hereafter and secures his share of the world effortlessly. Thus, he derives benefit from both and comes to possess both the worlds. As a result, he acquires honor before Allah Who grants him whatever he asks of Him.

Rumi offers an interesting allegory. He compares the Hereafter and the world to a caravan of camels and the trail of dung that it leaves behind. If one's aim were to own the camels, he would also have the camels' dung and wool. But if one wants only the dung and the wool, he will never come to acquire the camels and will always be collecting dung and wool of camels which belong to others.

Hanker you after faith for its pursuit yields
Beauty, wealth, honor and good fortune.
Consider the Hereafter as a camel train;
The world is a trail of wool and dung in its rear.
If you want only the wool, you will never the camels own;
Yet if you own a camel train, isn't its wool your own ?!

That the relation of the world to the Hereafter is like that of a secondary thing to its primary. Worldliness, being a pursuit of the secondary, leads to deprivation from the benefits of the Hereafter. Other worldliness by itself ensures the benefits of the world. Such a teaching originates in the Holy Quran. Verses 145-148 of surat Imran expressly and verses 18 and 19 of surat al-"Isra' together with verse 20 of surat al-Shura implicitly present this view.

A Relevant Tradition

There is a well-known tradition found in the texts of hadith as well as in other books and is also mentioned in the last will of Imam al-Hassan al-Mujtaba (ع). This is the text of the tradition: "In regard to the world, be as if you were going to live forever. With respect to the Hereafter, be as if you were going to die tomorrow.[106]

[106] *Wasail al- Shia*, Vol. 2, p. 535 (*Bab* No. 82, *hadith* No. 2).

This tradition has been highly controversial in that it has led to contradictory interpretations. Some people interpret it as implying that one should deal with worldly matters with relaxed inattention and without hurrying. Whenever one is faced with an affair of worldly life, one should say to himself, "There is still a lot of time, why hurry?" But when performing good deeds for the Hereafter, one should imagine as if he were not going to be alive after tomorrow and say to himself: "There is not much time left; it is already too late."

Others with the conviction that Islam never recommends negligence and carelessness, which certainly has not been the practice of the leaders of the faith, have said that what is implied is that one should always approach the worldly affairs as if he were immortal, attend to them with attention and care and not perform them in a perfunctory manner with the pretext that life is fleeting. Rather, they say, the works of the world should be done with firmness and great foresight and attention, as if one were going to live till the end of the world. The rationale for this is that if one were to die, others will derive benefit from one's deeds. The affairs of the Hereafter, however, are in Allah's hand; so think of them as if you were going to die tomorrow and there is not much time left for anything.

As can be noticed, the first of these two interpretations recommends negligence and lack of commitment towards the affairs of the world, whereas the second advises a similar attitude towards the Hereafter. Obviously, none of these two interpretations can be regarded as acceptable.

In our opinion, this, one of the most subtle of traditions, consists of an invitation to action, care and attention and avoidance of negligence and indifference, whether with respect to the worldly activities or to those which relate to the Hereafter.

Suppose a person living in a house knows that sooner or later he will have to move to another house where he will stay permanently. However, he does not know the day, the month or the year when he shall have to make to move. Such a person is in a state of dilemma with regard to matters relevant to his present home and his plans about his future house. If he knows that he will move tomorrow, he will not pay any attention to the repairs and upkeep of his present house and attend only to matters concerning the planned move. But if he knows that he will not be changing residence for several years, he will act in an opposite manner.

Presently, he will devote all his attention to the present house, knowing that there is much time left to deal with those relevant to his future residence.

Now this person, who is in a state of doubt about the exact date of his move, not knowing whether he will have to move in the near future or remain in his present house for years, meets a friend who wisely advises him to tend to the affairs of his present house as if he were to continue living there for a long time and not to neglect its upkeep. As to the other house, the wise friend advises him to get it ready as if he were going to move tomorrow and have it furnished as soon as possible. This advice will have the consequence that it will make him adopt a serious and active attitude towards both his houses.

Suppose someone wants to start an undertaking, such as writing a book or founding an institution or taking up a project which requires years of pursuit. If such a person thinks that he will not live long enough to finish his work, he might desist from starting it. That is why it is said that one must think that he will live for long. But the same person, from the point of view of repenting for his sins and compensating for the past excesses with regard to religious duties or the rights of the people which he has transgressed—all of which require little time for their accomplishment given the will to do so—may keep on postponing them every day so that the promised tomorrow may never come. In such cases, contrary to the first kind of attitude, to assume that one has still enough time and there is no reason to hasten, would result in negligence and delay in the fulfilment of one's duties. Therefore, here one should assume that there is not much time left.

Thus, we see that in one case, to assume that one has enough time encourages action and endeavor and the assumption that there is no time left leads one to abstain from action and endeavor. In the other case, the result is quite the opposite. Here, the assumption that one has still a lot of time leads to negligence and procrastination and the assumption that there is not much time left leads to quick accomplishment of duties.

In the light of this, the hadith means to say that with regard to one kind of duties, one should assume that he is going to live on, and with respect to another kind, he must suppose that not much remains of his life.

This interpretation is not baseless. There are several traditions which confirm the above interpretation. The reason that this tradition gave rise to controversy is that attention was not paid to such traditions.

Safinat al-Bihar, under rifq, relates a tradition of the Holy Prophet (ص) addressed to Jabir: "Indeed, this (i.e. Islam) is a firm religion. So (do not make it hard on yourself but) act in it with mildness. Cultivate like one who thinks he will never die, and work (for the hereafter) like one who is afraid he will die tomorrow.

In Volume 15 of Bihar al-Anwar (in the section on akhlaq, Ch. 29), it is related from Al-Kafi that the Holy Prophet (ص) addressed Ali (ع) saying: "This (religion of Islam) is a firm religion. So, work like him who hopes to live for long and be cautious like him who is afraid that he will die tomorrow. That is, when commencing a useful project that requires a long time for its completion, assume that you will live long enough to complete it. However, with regard to matters which you might postpone, thinking that you have enough time to handle them, assume that you shall die tomorrow, so that time is not wasted and delay is avoided.

In Nahjul-Balagha, it is related from the Holy Prophet (ص) that he said: "Attend to the affairs of the world; but with respect to the Hereafter, be such as if you are going to die tomorrow."

In the same book, the Prophet (ص) is related as saying: " Work like the man who imagines that he will never die, and be cautious like one who knows he is going to die tomorrow."

In another tradition, the Prophet (ص) is reported to have said: "The mu'min is the most vexed of all men, for he must attend to the affairs of the world as well as to those of the Hereafter."

In Safinat al-Bihar, under nafs, one hadith by Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) is related from Tuhaf al-Uqul to the effect that: "He who abandons the world for his Hereafter or abandons his Hereafter for his world is not from us.

The above discussion, on the whole, underscroes our interpretation of the said hadith and also shows that this approach finds a recurring echo in the teachings of the leaders of the Islamic faith.

Concluded; walhamdu lillah!

What is Shi`ism (تشيع)?
1 - Shi`ism in the Contemporary World

Nowadays, according to the latest statistics, there are more than one hundred and thirty million Shi`ites in different parts of the world. They are concentrated mostly in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Turkey, Caucasia, Egypt and other Muslim countries of North and Central Africa.

From the quantitative point of view, Shi`ism comprises about one fourth of the total Islamic community of the world. From the point of view of intellectual and scholarly activity, a notable portion of the intellectual treasures of the Islamic world has been created by Shi`ite scholars. Yet, unfortunately, there are still quite a few people everywhere who are not acquainted with the principles of Shi`ite ideologies. Even our Sunni brothers, who comprise three-fourths of the Islamic community and in many countries live along side by side with us, are not completely informed of our method of thought and beliefs.

For those who live in the East, this situation should not cause much surprise for the “agents of colonialism”who see the preservation of their interests in causing internal conflicts in this region, have explored every avenue possible to cause hatred and division between these two groups of Muslims. In order to achieve this end, they have even inverted the truth itself. As a consequence of this pessimism, there have been occasional fights between the two groups of Muslims, fights which have incurred nothing but loss upon the Islamic community. Yet, for those who had fixed their covetous eye on the extensive and vital resources of this vast region, such disputes were considered as a great victory.

Fortunately, as a result of the awakening of the East and the spread of means of communication as well as the disappearance of unworthy prejudices, this situation has changed almost completely nowadays.

This change is indicated by the fact that about 20 years ago, on behalf of the professors and directors of al-Azhar University in Cairo, one of the leading centers of learning of the Sunni world, there was established a center called Athe center for rapprochement between Islamic schools with the collaboration of Shi`ite scholars. The aim of this center, as certified by its name, is to bring about familiarity and proximity

between the Muslims of the world. Its members are comprised of well-known Shi`ite and Sunni scholars and by chance the general secretary is [presently] a Persian Shi`ite.[107] This Center publishes a scholarly journal called Risalat al-Islam in which scholars of both schools write articles based on sound proofs in order to illuminate the minds of the general Muslim public throughout the world. The late rector of al-Azhar University and the Grand Mufti of the Sunnis, Shaikh Mahmud Shaltut, for the first time declared openly the official recognition of the religious teaching of the Shi`ite school. He permitted all Sunnis to perform their religious duties according to Shi`ite beliefs if they wish to do so. (Of course the background of this declaration had been prepared before by other scholars such as Shaikh Abd al-Majid Salim.). This declaration had a very good effect on the great majority of the Muslim public and was very effective in creating mutual understanding between the two groups. Only a few fanatically minded people were disturbed by it.

2 - Centers of Shi`ite Learning

Shi`ism possesses several universities in different parts of the world where Islamic sciences can be studied. The most important among them are the centers of Najaf, Qum and Mashhad. Most of the outstanding leaders of Shi`ism come from these three centers, and they are all professors who teach in these universities. In these and other centers of learning, there are numerous scholars, writers, propagators of the faith and preachers.

A relatively large number of students are studying in Qum, Mashhad and Najaf. The graduating students, after completing their studies, are sent to different regions as directors of religious affairs or religious preachers or, if necessary, they are called upon to become teachers and lecturers in the centers of learning.

An important segment of the scholarly and intellectual treasures of Islam has been written by Shi`ite scholars.

Also, according to reliable and trustworthy documents at hand, all or most of the Islamic sciences have been founded by Shi`ite scholars, that is, Shi`as have been the first to create and establish those sciences.

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[107]This statement may be labeled “out of date”now. The said center is now inactive due to the control of the Egyptian government of the management of the Al-Azhar Mosque and University, and prejudices against the Shi`as in Egypt and elsewhere are now rife. ─ Ed.

Shi`ite preachers are trained in such a way that, unlike other speakers, they can deliver from memory, and without any notes, instructive scientific and social lectures as well as warm and pleasing sermons, each exceeding one or two hours.

The late great leader and guide of the world of Shi`ism, namely Ayatullah Burujardi, expressed a great deal of interest in making Shi`ism known to the whole world. He was sure that if the beliefs of Shi`ite Muslims were to be made known to the world in a correct way, they would be rapidly accepted and people would find in them a shelter within which they can find solutions for the social and moral difficulties facing the modern world. Islam can provide an answer for the needs of the humanity of our century and of any other century. For this reason, he endeavored to send propagators of Shi`ism to Europe and America and sent competent preachers of the faith to these regions. Unfortunately, the possibilities did not permit any more than this. In West Germany, specifically in Hamburg (on the bank of the beautiful Alster lake), plans were made for building a majestic mosque called Athe mosque of Persians. This mosque, the first Shi`ite religious building in the Western world, has been constructed on a four thousand square meter lot and with heavy expenses. A large number of Muslims, Shi`ite and Sunni alike, perform their religious rites in this mosque.

Tourists visiting Hamburg come to see this beautiful and interesting mosque in which are combined Oriental and Occidental schools of are and architecture and where the Oriental and Islamic aspects are very obvious.

In Shi`ite universities, especially those of Najaf, Qum, Mashhad and Tehran, there are large libraries most of whose books consist of works of renown Islamic scholars. It is also of interest to note that the great al-Azhar University of Cairo and the Islamic Qarawiyyin University in Morocco, which are among the eldest universities in the world, were founded by Shi`ites, the first by the Fatimide caliphs and the second by the Idrisid sultans.

3 - Origin of Shi`ism

Occasionally, certain people, because of mis-information or ill-intentions, make it appear as if Shi`ism is something other than the religion promulgated by Muhammad (ص) upon whom be blessings and

peace, the great leader of the Islamic world and that Shī`ism came into being in later centuries.

The truth is that Shi`ism is nothing but Islam and Shi`ites consider as unworthy and without authority anything that has the least conflict with the religion of the Prophet (ص) of Islam and the Holy Quran.

Altogether, it must be remembered that Shi`ism is not a special religion visa-vis Islam about whose origin one could debate. Shi`ism from its own point of view is none other than the sacred religion of Islam itself as founded by the Holy Prophet, Muhammad ibn Abdullah (ص). Only Shi`ism believes that the best means to know Islam and the teachings of the Prophet (ص) is through his family who were the closest to him and were brought up in the atmosphere of revelation., therefore, the date of origin of Shi`ism is same as Islam itself.

The Holy Quran, according to Shi`ism, is the most important untouched source of Islam which has reached us without any change from the Prophet (ص). For this reason the Holy Quran is made the criterion and means of judgement of the authenticity or falsehood of sayings which have reached us from the great leaders of religions, the means to judge between authentic sayings and those that are forged. Any saying that has been handed down, if it accords with the Holy Quran is acceptable and if not, rejected.

Taking these truths into view, there is no need to remind people that Shi`ism begins with the first instance when the revelation descended upon the Prophet (ص) of Islam.

4 - Shi`ites and other Muslims

What distinguishes the Shi`ites from other Muslims? the answer to this question is clear. The first point that distinguishes the Shi`ites from Sunnis is the question of succession to the Prophet (ص). Shi`ism believes that the status of succession and vicegerency (caliphate) of the Prophet (ص) is a sacred and responsible function which like that of prediction itself must be designated by Allah. A person who occupies this status is called the Imam. The first Imam who was chosen by Allah through the prophet was Ali (ع) upon whom be peace. After him eleven other members of the family of the Prophet (ص) were chosen for this status.

AThe first of them is Ali (ع) ibn Abu Talib upon whom be peace. Ali (ع) was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (ص) and according to the confession of the scholars of Islam the most learned, self-sacrificing and courageous of the companions of the Prophet (ص). He was the first man to accept the faith and never separated from the Prophet (ص) throughout his life.

During the last year of his life the Prophet (ص), while returning from pilgrimage to Medina in a place called Ghadir Khumm, officially designated Ali (ع) as his successor before a large gathering of Muslims.

Before this event also he had referred several times to this matter. Furthermore, the intellectual, spiritual and religious distinctions of Ali (ع) were such that there was no one more worthy of becoming the successor of the Prophet (ص) than he. However, after the death of the Prophet (ص) political and tribal competition prevented him from becoming officially the caliph and leader of Muslims.

At the same time many of the outstanding personalities among the well-known companions and aides of the Prophet (ص) remained faithful to him and were proud to follow him. But in order not to create any dissension or breach in the ranks of Muslims, they did not oppose openly the caliph of the time.

Twenty-five years thereafter, following the caliphate of three other men, Muslims turned to him again and selected him as their leader.

Without doubt the period of rule and caliphate of Ali (ع) which was unfortunately short, having lasted about five years and which terminated with his martyrdom, was the most perfect and exalted example of just and truthful government and fight against all unjust inequalities. This is a matter which no historian can deny. Today his meaningful and wise sayings have survived and make known his school. The Shi`ites of the world boast in having such a leader. Even the word Shi`a which etymologically means “partisan”or “follower”has come into being through the fact that the members of this group are the partisans of such a leader.

Shi`ites believe that after Ali (ع), eleven of his descendants became consecutively the successors and vicegerents of the Prophet (ص) and with Ali (ع) himself comprise the "Twelve Imams (ع)".

Their names are as follows:

1 - Ali ibn abi Talib (ع).
2 - Hassan ibn Ali (ع).
3 - Hussein ibn Ali (ع).
4 - Ali ibn al-Hussein (ع).
5 - Muhammad ibn Ali (ع).
6 - Ja`far ibn Muhammad (ع).
7 - Musa ibn Ja`far (ع).
8 - Ali ibn Msa (ع).
9 - Muhammad ibn Ali (ع).
10 - Ali ibn Muhammad (ع).
11 - Hassan ibn Ali (ع).
12 - Muhammad ibn Hassan (ع).

From these excellent leaders we have today available abundant legacies of Islamic sciences.

Shi`ism believes that the earth can never be without the special representative of Allah (the Prophet [ص] and his vicegerents). They have been ordered to guide, lead and train the people of the world and continue to do so. Shi`ism believes that the Twelfth Imam is right now alive and endowed with a long life.

This matter is neither beyond the power of Allah which all religious people believe in nor against the principles of modern biology.

Shi`ites, like all Muslims, believe that finally a day will come when mankind will reach an impasse because of injustice, struggles, wars and bloodshed. Then with a sacred spiritual revolution guided by one of the descendants. Peace, justice and faith in Allah will dominate everywhere and all peoples and nations will live in a lasting peace and tranquillity. Only, Shi`ism believes that the leader of this revolution will be none other than the Twelfth Imam.

5 - Shi`ite Beliefs

Shi`ism believes that Islam is not only a series of commands or ceremonial regulations which man performs at particular hours or days of the week. Rather, it believes religion is comprised of a series of exalted instructions and beliefs and a group of life-giving regulations and laws which are intertwined with man's individual and social life.

The aim of religion is to provide felicity for man in all aspects of life.

The basis of Shi`ite beliefs like those of other Muslims, is threefold.

I Unity of God (Tawhid)

Shi`a Muslism believe Allah to be one without any associate or like or progeny. Shi`ism is violently opposed to every form of polytheism, idol worshipping and deviation from unity and also to all kinds of taking human being as masters beside Allah and addressing prayers to them. It believes that Allah is the creator of the whole universe and, therefore, holds that throughout the universe nothing is created but for a benefit and purpose.

Shi`ism believes that Allah is neither body nor matter. Rather, He is above all that is material and, therefore, has no specific place or location. He is omnipresent and omniscient. He is closer to us than ourselves. He sees everything and hears every sound but His vision and hearing are not in our case with eyes and ears.

The near and remote past and future are alike for him and all things indifferently known and evident in His knowledge. He has even knowledge of thoughts that pass through our minds. He is one in every way and does not consist of parts. Even His Qualities, such as His power and knowledge, are identical with His Pure Essence. His Being has no beginning nor end. It is pre-eternal and past-eternal (He exists from eternity to eternity). He is in every way Absolute Being. His Qualities do not resemble the qualities of the creatures for these are in all aspects limited whereas, He is in every way unlimited. Forgiving the sins of his servants is solely at his own absolute discretion and nobody even the prophet of Islam or the Imams can do anything for remission of the sins.

II Prophethood: The Sending of the Prophet (ص) (Nubuwwa)

Shi`ism believes that Allah, in order to guide His creatures and lead them from the darkness of ignorance and misery to the light of knowledge and happiness, has sent a number of prophets. For Allah has created man for felicity and happiness and has created the means for the attainment of this end in the existence of the universe itself.

Sending prophets is also with the purpose of perfecting this goal. That is why the teachings of the prophets and the Divine Laws are always the supplement for creation organization of human being. Any law which is opposed to the primordial nature and creation of man is surely not revealed by Allah.

Shi`ism believes that the aim of the prophets has never been to propagate unintelligible matters such as the endurance of every kind of disagreeable situation and torture or sacrifice for the sins of others. Rather, their aim has been that same correct instruction and training, the strengthening of moral principles and the relation between men and the establishment of the principles of justice among mankind.

The Holy Quran in many verses has clearly reminded man of this truth.

Shi`ism respects all prophets of Allah without exception but believes that as a result of the passage of time their holy books have become mixed with kinds of superstitions and have suffered various forms of deviation. A living witness to this fact is the unjust and childish qualities mentioned in these books about Allah and His prophets.

According to Shi`ism all the prophets of Allah, even Muhammad (ص), Moses and Jesus Christ (ع) are recognized as the servants of Allah!, but they were qualified as obedient servants to whom Allah inspired. That is, the convictions is that all of the prophets and Imams have neither committed any sin nor any omission or error during their life time.

III Belief in the Day of Resurrection (Ma`ad)

Shi`ism, like all other Islamic schools of thought, believes that in a determined time all men will be resurrected and in another world which is everlasting and eternal and will receive the reward or punishment of their good or evil works. The least good or evil action is accounted for

and its account is preserved by Allah. No one will be treated with injustice or oppression.

Those who have performed good works shall go to eternal paradise in which is found every kind of spiritual and corporeal blessing and evil doers will be sent to the inferno unless they repent in this world. Repentance means that one would seriously and cordially repent from his or her past sins and decide definitely not to adhere to such sins in the future, as well as indemnify and make good what would be deemed repayable and where he or she has infringed and violated the rights of other individuals, to restore and repair them to the rightful party.

6 - Distinctions of Shi`ism

Shi`ism shares the three above-mentioned principles with other Muslims but there are two points which are its distinguishing marks:

1- Belief in the Twelve Imams who are the vicegerents of the Prophet (ص) and whose account has already been given.

2 - Belief in the Divine justice. By this it means that Shi`ism believes Allah never deals with injustice or oppression toward others which is a sign of either ignorance or lack of power, whereas Allah is omniscient and omnipotent. As a consequence of this principle Shi`ism also believes that all human beings possess the freedom of will. No one is forced to obey or rebel. The destiny of each person is in his own hands. No one bears the weight of the sins of others nor is anyone punished for the wrong doings of others.

7 - Sources of Shi`ite Religious Instructions

Shi`ism has received its religious instructions which concern all aspects of private and social life from the closest source of knowledge to the Prophet (ص), that is, the household of the Prophet (ص) (the Twelve Imams) who have received their knowledge either directly or through intermediaries from the Prophet (ص) himself. In its method the Prophet (ص) which all Muslims remember from him: “I am departing from you but I have among you two precious things: The Holy Quran, the Book of Allah and my household who will never separate from each other.

In order to discern and distinguish religious obligations Shi`ism follows, in addition to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (ص) and the Imams, that which meets the consensus of the `ulema' (scholars) and also that which reason can judge with certainty. These four principles (the Holy Quran, traditions of the Prophet [ص] and Imams (ع), consensus of the ulema' and reason) are called the fourfold proofs.

Shi`ism believes that it is a duty of religious scholars to investigate these sources and deduce the religious obligations and instructions of Islam from them. Or one could say that the gate of ijtihad (giving judgement and opinion on religious matters) is open to all the `ulema'.

In the principles of Islamic injunctions and laws there is no difference of opinion between Shi`ite and Sunni scholars.

The only difference of view is in certain aspects of the details of problems.

Shi`ism holds that Islam is an everlasting religion which is at the same time easy to accept and can be followed by one at all places. Shi`ite scholars have collected the individual and social duties and instructions of Islam in detail in books called the Abooks in jurisprudence (fiqh) and have created numerous sciences for the refinement and examination of these injunctions.

Shi`ism like all of Muslims believes that each Muslim must pray five times a day, fast one month a year during Ramadan and in case he or she possesses the financial and physical ability and means to participate once during his or her lifetime in the great Islamic congress, the Hajj, in Mecca and to perform special ceremonies that are full of majesty and spirituality with other Muslim brothers. Also each Muslim is obliged to pay to the public treasury to Islam a certain amount of his wealth (of course under special conditions) as Zakat in order to help the needy, perform charitable acts and defend the borders of Muslim countries.

Shi`ism also believes that in addition to this Islamic tax there is another tax described as Khums for individuals having financial ability according to special regulations.

Shi`ism also believes that in case Muslim countries are invaded by an enemy all who have the ability must take up arms and as a religious

duty in the path of “defending their homeland”to fight with the enemy unto death. Martyrdom in such a path is considered as a great honor.

Moreover, all Muslims have the duty to act in a correct and logical manner to guide and instruct individuals who have perverted the right way toward the good and to combat individual and social corruption. This “great national supervision,”following the inspiration of the Holy Quran, is called amr bil maruf and nahy anil munkar.

8 - Social and Moral Duties

Shi`ism believes that a true and conscientious Muslim is one who does not forget Allah under any condition, who is truthful, trustworthy, upright and friendly, who is aware of the condition of his brother Muslims and does not refuse any kind of help to them. (One must remember that Muslims address each other as brothers and this is the closest relationship that exists between two human beings on the basis of mutual respect and equality. In this matter they have been inspired by the Holy Quran that has said, “All Muslims are brethren”). No racial, class or family distinction can cause one person to become superior to another. The only distinction is what pertains to piety and chastity. Therefore, from our point of view every form of racial discrimination is rejected.

Shi`ism possesses extensive teachings concerning rights which it has received from the Imams. Even the animals have rights. To assault them without reason is condemned. On the contrary they should be protected.

Shi`ism asserts that no one should stop striving and trying in order to earn a livelihood and that no one should become a burden to society. At the same time striving to have a better life should not disregard moral principles and virtue.

Shi`ism prohibits alcoholic beverages, narcotics, pork, gambling, sexual promiscuity and usury and its like.

It considers the principle of cooperation as the most important basis of social life and the first duty of a Muslim toward others. Like other Muslims, Shi`ites consider human life as particularly significant so that for murder, blood-shed and injury upon others heavy penalties have been foreseen in Islamic penal codes.

Also special rights and much importance are held for the family, the upbringing of children, kindness towards relatives, even distant ones and neighbors.

Shi`ism like the rest of Islam respects the rights of women as a basic principle of the family and in contrast to many other religions gives complete economic independence to women.

Like other Muslims, Shi`ites are permitted to have more than one wife but not only is this matter non-obligatory but has heavy conditions imposed upon it. Taking these conditions into considerations, only in case one's wife cannot bear children or perform thematerial act or if a woman does not have someone to look after her and is in need of such care or in similar cases does marriage to more than one wife take place.

Contrary to what many westerners think the number of men in Islamic countries having more than one wife does not exceed one percent. It is obvious that this polygamy under stringent conditions is quite virtuous and cannot in any way be compared with the illicit and unconditional sexual relations of non-Muslim men with a large number of women.

Shi`ism believes that all Muslims should participate in all social and political problems that pertain to them and should pursue these problems with awareness. It is opposed to solitary life, retirement from the world and monasticism.

Shi`ism believes that Islamic societies should base their rule upon the teachings and laws of Islam and consider the welfare of the individuals with inspiration drawn from the teachings of Islam and according to the needs and requirements of the moment. They should try their utmost to advance in all spiritual and material domains.

Nahjul-Balagha : The Book, This Book

"One cannot help liking young Ali (ع). A noble-minded person, as he shows himself, now and always afterwards, a man full of affection, one who loved everyone. There is something chivalrous in him: he is as brave as lion, yet with a grace, a truth and affection worthy of Christian knighthood."

Thomas Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship, p. 77 (1968 edition)

This Book

This book is a translation of the sermons, letters, orders and some of the sayings of Imam Ali (ع) as compiled by Sayyid al-Razi and called A Nahjul-Balagha, the path to eloquence.

These sermons and preaching of Imam Ali (ع) were so highly valued and venerated in the Islamic world that within a century of his death they were taught and read as the last word on the philosophy of monotheism, as the best lectures for character building, as exalted sources of inspiration, as very persuasive sermons towards piety, as guiding beacons towards truth and justice, as marvelous eulogies of the Holy Prophet (ص) and the Holy Quran, as convincing discourses on the spiritual values of Islam, as awe inspiring discussions about the attributes of Allah. As an historic masterpiece in literature alone Nahjul-Balagha is the original and undisputed model in the Art of Rhetoric.

In the 1st Century A.H.

According to the famous book of biographies Rijal al-Kabir, the first person to collect these sermons in a book form was Zaid ibn Wahab al-Juhni, who died in 90 A.H. And who was regarded as a narrator of ahadith. Thus, within thirty years of Imam Ali's death and during the first century of Hijra, his sermons, letters, ahadith etc. were collected quoted and preserved.

In the 2nd Century A.H.

With the dawn of 2nd century, Ibn Wahab's example was followed by (1) the famous calligrapher of the early Abbaside regime, Abdul Hamid ibn Yahya (132 A.H.), (2) then ibn al-Muqaffa' (142 A.H.) took up this work of compilation. Jahiz al-Othmani says ibn al-Muqaffa had very carefully studied these sermons and used to say that he had saturated himself from the Fountains head of knowledge and wisdom and was daily getting fresh inspirations from these sermons (3) Ibn Nadim in his biography book titled The Fahrist says that Hisham ibn al-Sa'ib al-Kalbi (146 A.H.) had also collected these sermons (Fahrist: Ibn Nadim, section VII page 251).

Thence onward, century after century, Muslim scholars, theologians, historians and traditionists were citing these sermons, quoting them, discussing the meanings of the words and phrases used by Imam Ali (ع) and referring them when they needed an authority on the ology, ethics, the teaching of the Holy Prophet (ص) and the Holy Quran or on literature and rhetoric.

In the 3rd Century

During the third century five famous men took up this work:

1. Abu `Othman Umar ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, who died in 255 A.H. (868 A.D.), quoted many sermons in his book Al- Bayan wal Tabyin.
2. Ibn Qutaybah al-Daynuri, who died in 276 A.H. in his books Uyin al-Akhbar and Gharib al-Hadith quoted many sermons and discussed meanings of many words and phrases used by Imam Ali (ع).
3. Ibn Wazih al-Ya`qubi, who died in 278 A.H. cited many sermons and sayings of Imam Ali (ع) in his History.
4. Abu Hanifah al-Daynuri (280 A.H.), in his history Akhbar al-Tiwal, quotes many sermons and sayings.
5. Abul-Abbas al-Mubarrad (286 A.H.), in his book Kitab al-Mubarrad, collected many sermons and letters.

In the 4th Century

1. The famous historian ibn Jarir al-Tabari, who died in 310 A.H. quoted some of these sermons in his Tarikh al-Kabir.

2. Abu Muhammad Hassan ibn Ali ibn Shu'bah al-Halabi (320 A.H.) had collected some sermons in his book Tuhaf al-`Uqul. This book was later printed in Iran.

The following writers have also extensively quoted the sermons and sayings of Imam Ali (ع) in their respective books.

3. Ibn Warid (321 A.H.) in his book Al-Mujtabeen.
4. Ibn Abd Rabbih (328 A.H.) in Al-Iqd al-Farid.
5. Thiqatul-Islam al-Kulayni (329 A.H.) in his book titled Al-Kafi.
6. Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Madani (335 A.H.) collected sermons, letters and sayings of the Imam (ع) in his book. Yaqut al-Hamawi mentions of this book in Mu'jam al-Udaba' page 313 Vol. 5.
7. The historian al-Mas`udi (346 A.H.), in Muruj al-Dhahab, has quoted some of the letters and sermons of the Imam (ع).
8. Abul-Faraj al-Isbahani (356 A.H.) in his book titled Al-Aghani,
9. Abu Ali Quali (356 A.H.) in his Nawadir and
10. Shaikh al-Saduq (381 A.H.) in Kitab al-Tawhid, has extensively quoted these sermons, letters and sayings.

In the 5th Century

1. Shaikh al-Mufid (413 A.H.) in Al-Irshad has quoted many sermons, ahadith sayings and letters of the Imam (ع).
2. Sayyid al-Razi (420 A.H.) compiled the book titled Nahjul-Balagha.
3. Shaikhul Ta'ifa [sect's scholar] Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Tusi (460 A.H.) was a contemporary of Sayyid al-Razi and had collected some of these sermons etc. long before Sayyid took up his work.

What Sayyid al-Razi could compile in Nahjul-Balagha does not contain all the sermons letters and sayings of Imam Ali (ع). Mas`udi (346 A.H.) in his famous history Muruj al-Dhahab (Vol. 2, p. 33 printed at Cairo) says that only sermons of Imam Ali (ع), which have been preserved by various people, number more than four hundred and eighty. These were spontaneous orations, people have copied them one from another and have compiled them in book forms; they have cited them and have quoted passages from them in their books.

Apparently out of these four hundred and eighty sermons some were lost and Sayyid al-Razi could lay hand on only about 245 sermons, in addition he collected about 75 letters and more than 200 sayings. Almost everyone of the sermons, letters and sayings collected in Nahjul-Balagha is to be found in books of Authors who died long before Sayyid al-Razi was born, while some are found in works of such authors who, though his contemporaries, yet were older to him and had written their books before Nahjul-Balagha was compiled. In the Index No. 2: A,B and C, I have given a list of the names of these authors, books and the number of sermons, etc. found in those books.

If I quote all of what has been said by the Muslim and the Christian Arab scholars, theologians, philosophers and historians in praises of these sermons, sayings and letters, it will cover a Volume as big as this book, therefore, I shall briefly quote only a few of them:

1. Abu Sa'adah Mubarak ibn al-Athir al-Jazri (606 A.H.) is recognized unto this day not only as a narrator of ahadith but also as a lexicologist of great eminence. His book Al-Nihaya, is a study of the history and meanings of the difficult words of Holy Quran and the traditions. In this book he has at great length discussed many words, phrases and the sentences of the Imam Ali's sermons from the book Nahjul-Balagha. He says that so far as comprehensiveness is concerned Ali's words come next only to the Holy Quran.

2. Allama Shaikh Kamalludin ibn Muhammad ibn Talhah, the Shafi'ite, (who died in 652 A.H.) in his famous book Matalib al-Sul, writes the following: "The fourth attribute of Imam Ali (ع) was his eloquence and rhetoric. He was such an Imam in these arts that none can aspire to rise up to the level of the dust of his shoes. One who has studied Nahjul- Balagha can form some idea of his supreme eminence in this sphere."

3. Allama Abu Hamid Abdul Hamid ibn Hibathullah, known as Ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite, who died in 655 A.H. And who has written a really great commentary on these sermons says the following:

    i His speeches, letters and sayings are so supremely eminent that they are above the sayings of man and below only the words of Allah. None can surpass it but the Holy Quran.

ii In another place, he says, "His sayings are (the actualized) miracle of the Holy Prophet (ص). His predictions show that his knowledge was super-human."

4. Allama Sa`ddud-Din al-Taftazani (791 A.H.), in Sharh al-Maqasid, says, "Ali had a supreme command over the language, over ethics and over the tenets of the religion. At the same time, he was a great orator. His sermons, compiled in Nahjul-Balagha, bear witness to these facts.

5. Allama Ala'ud-Din al-Qawshaji (875 A.H.), in Sharah al-Tajrid, says, "The book Nahjul-Balagha, that is, the sermons and sayings contained the rein, prove that none can surpass it on these lines but the Holy Quran.

6. The mufti of Egypt, Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh (1323 A.H.), has written a commentary on the book, Nahjul-Balagha. He was among those modern thinkers, who made themodern world realize the beauties of the teaching of Islam. His introduction on his own commentary of Nahjul-Balagha deserves careful study.

In this Introduction, he says that everyone who fully understands Arabic language must agree that the sermons and sayings of the Imam (ع) are next only to the words of Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص). Ali's words are so full of meanings and they convey such great ideas that this book Nahjul-Balagha should be very carefully studied, referred and quoted by students as well as teachers. This professor of Arabic literature and philosophy persuaded the universities of Cairo and Beirut to include the book Nahjul-Balagha in their courses for advance studies of literature and philosophy.

7. The famous author and orator Shaikh Mustafa Ghalaini of Beirut, who is considered as an authority on commentaries (tafsir) of the Holy Quran and also on Arabic literature in his book, Arij al-Zahr and from the chapter titled The Style of Language is written: "Who can write better than Ali except the Holy Prophet (ص) and Allah. Those who want to study eminent standards of literature should study the book Nahjul-Balagha. It contains such depth of knowledge and such wonderful advises on the subjects of ethics and religion that its constant study will make a man wise, pious and noble-minded and will train him to be an orator of great standing.

8. Muhammad Mohiuddin, a professor of Arabic at Al-Azhar University of Cairo, says that Nahjul-Balagha is a collection of the works of Imam Ali (ع). It is compiled by Sayyid al-Razi. It contains such examples of chaste language, noble eloquence and superior wisdom that none but Ali can produce such a work because next to the Holy Prophet (ص), he was the greatest orator, the greatest authority on language and literature and the greatest source of wisdom of the religion (Islam). He was such a philosopher that from his words flow streams of knowledge and wisdom.

9. Abdul Wahhab Hammudah, an authority on Arabic literature and on traditions and also a professor at the Fu'ad I University of Cairo, wrote the following in 1951: "The Book Nahjul-Balagha contains all that great scholars, professor of ethics, philosophers, scientists, authorities on religions and politicians can say or write. The wonderful force of advises and the superfine way of presenting arguments and the depth of vision prove that it is the work of a super mind like that of Ali (ع)."

10. Abdul Maseeh al-Antaki, the Christian editor of the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, in his famous book titled Sharh al-Quasaid al-Alawiyya writes the following: "It cannot be denied that Ali (ع) was the Imam of speakers and orators and he was the teacher and leader of writers and philosophers. There is truth in this assertion that his sayings are superior to that of any man and are inferior only to the sayings of Allah the Almighty. He undoubtedly was the man from writers, speakers, philosophers, theologians and poets have drawn inspirations, have improved their styles and have mastered their arts. The compilation of his work is named Nahjul-Balagha, which should be read often."

11. Fu'ad Afram al-Bustani, a professor of Arabic literature, in the Qiddis Yousuf [Saint Joseph] College of Beirut, is a Roman Catholic. He has compiled a book containing selections from the works of philosophers, scientists, theologians and essayists. He starts this book with the following words, AI want to start this work of mine with the selections from the book Nahjul-Balagha. It is a work of the greatest thinker of the world Imam Ali-Ibn Abu-Talib.

12. The famous Christian moralist, author and poet, Paulis Salamah, in his famous book Awwal Malhama al-Arabiyya (printed at al-Ans ari Press of Beirut) says, “The famous book Nahjul-Balagha is the work which makes one realizes the great mind of Ali ibn Abu Talib. No book can surpass it but the Holy Quran. In it, you will find pearls of knowledge strung in beautiful chains, flowers of language making ones mind fragrant with sweet and pleasing smell of heroism and nobility and streams of chaste language sweeter and cooler than the famous stream of the Kawthar flowing constantly and refreshing minds of readers.

Author:

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع)

1. Genealogy

Imam Ali (ع), the master of the faithful, was the first cousin of the Holy Prophet (ص). His father, Abu Talib and the father of the Holy Prophet (ص), Abdullah, were sons of Abdul-Muttalib and children of the same mother, Fatima (ع), the daughter of Asad son of the famous Banu Hashim. Thus, his (Imam Ali's) parents were cousins. His genealogical table is as follows. etc. (Refer to Index 1).

2. Birth

Hazrat Ali (ع) was born on the 13th of Rajab 30 A.H. (in the Year of Elephant) (about 610 A.D.), i.e. 23 years before the Hijra of the Holy Prophet (ص). Historians say that he was born in the precincts of Kaba. In this connection please refer the following books: 1. Imam Hakim, in his Mustadrak, 2. Al-Masudi, in his Muruj al-Dhahab, p. 125, 3. Izalatul-Khafa, 2nd subject, p. 251 and 4. Allama al-lusi in Sharh al-Ainiyya.

3. Name

At the time of his birth his father and his cousin, Muhammad, the Holy Prophet (ص), were out of Mecca, his mother gave him the names of Asad and Hayder; when his father returned he called him Zaid. But when the Holy Prophet (ص) came back to the city, he took his young cousin in his charge and gave him the name Ali, saying that it was the name decreed for him by Allah.

(1) Imam Noodi, the commentator of Bukhari.

(2) Ibn al-Arabi in his book Yawaqit.

(3) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, in his book Tadhkirat Khawas al-Aimma.

Hazrat Ali (ع) has referred to himself as Ali and Hayder.

4. Kunya

Among various kunyas, the most famous were Abdul-Hassan, Abul-Sibtain and Abu Turab. (Refer to the note below).

5. Titles

His titles were: "al-Murtada (the pleased one), Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) (the Commander of the Faithful), AImamul-Muttaqin (the leader of the pious)**.**

6. Physique

The famous historian and biographist Allama Ali ibn Muhammad, in his book titled Usd al-Ghaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba (book IV page 398), says that he was a man of middle height with very black and very big and piercing eyes, very handsome cast of face, very clear and fair complexion, broad shoulders, powerful arms, vast chest, strong and roughened hands, a long muscular neck, a broad forehead and he had few hairs on the top of his head.

Note: The names are derived from some relationship or kinship. It is an Arab system that respectable people are addressed with their kunya and not with their names.

Imam Hakim, in his Mustadrak (Vol. 3), Kamil ibn Athir in his Tarikh al-Khamis, Ibn Abdul Birr, in his Istiab (Vol. 2, p. 486) and Allama Tabrani, in his Riyad al-Nadira (Vol. 2 pp. 202 and 218) agree with the above description. Tabrani further says that he used to walk with very light tread and was very agile in his movements, had a very smiling face, very pleasing manner, a jovial temperament, very kind disposition and very courteous behavior. He would never lose his temper.

7. Upbringing

He was born three years before the marriage of the Holy Prophet (ص) with Hazrat Khadija. Soon after his birth, the Holy Prophet (ص) took him under his holy care and Ali was like a son unto him. He used to live with the Prophet (ص), used to sleep with him, was fed by him, washed and dressed by him and even carried by him on a sling whenever he would go out. The historian al-Masudi, in Ithbat al-Wasiyya (p. 119) says

that when the Holy Prophet (ص) married Khadija, she adopted this child as her son. Hazrat Ali himself has described his childhood in al-khutba al-qasi'a saying, "I was still a new born baby when the Prophet (ص) took me from my parents. I used to cling to him; he would make me sleep in his bed, pressing my body against his and making me smell his fragrance and feel its warmth; he used to feed me and (when I grew a little older) he never found me uttering a lie or feigning a deceit. To me, he was like a guiding star and I used to carefully follow his actions and deeds. I was attached to him like a young camel attached to its mother. He used to place before me high values of morality and used to advise me to follow them; every year he would spend some days at the grotto of the Hera mountain. And I used to be with him, I was his only companion then and none else could meet him at Hera, there I used to see the light of revelation and used to smell the fragrance of Prophet (ص)hood. Once the Holy Prophet (ص) said to me, `Ali! You have attained a very eminent place. You see what I see and you hear what I hear.'"

Both hafiz Abu Na'im in his book Hilyat al-Awliya', (Vol. 1, p. 67) and imam al-Sayyuti in his Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur say that once Holy Prophet (ص) said to Hazrat Ali (ع), "O Ali! Allah has ordered me to keep you near me. You are to me like an ear that retain everything because you are the retaining ears that the Holy book (Holy Quran) has praised."

8. The Holy Prophet (ص) and Hazrat Ali (ع): How They Loved Each Other

(i) Ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite scholar and commentator of Nahjul-Balagha, cites Abdullah ibn Abbas saying, "Once I asked my father: 'Father! My cousin, Muhammad, has many sons. They all died while still infants. Which of them did he love the most?' He replied: Ali ibn Abu Talib'. I said, 'Father! I was inquiring about his sons.' He replied, 'The Holy Prophet (ص) loved Ali (ع) more than all of his sons. When Ali (ع) was a child I never saw him separated from Muhammad (ص) for half an hour, unless Muhammad (ص) went out of the house for some work. I never saw a father love his son so much as the Holy Prophet (ص) loved Ali (ع) and I never saw a son so obedient, so attached and so loving to his father as Ali (ع) was to Muhammad (ص).'"

(ii) The same author cites the companion of the Holy Prophet (ص), Jubayr Ibn Mut`im ibn `Adiyy ibn Nawfil, saying that once his father addressed him and some young men of his family: "Have you noticed how the child Ali has been loving, venerating and obeying that young man, Muhammad (ص), instead of his own father?! What an intensity of love and veneration! I swear by our gods, the Lat and the Uzza, that instead of having so many offspring of Nawfil around me, I wish I had a son like Ali (ع)!"

(iii) Allama al-Tirmidhi (Jami al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 1, p. 38; Mishkat Vol. 2 p. 8 and Musnad Imam Ahmed Vol. I p. 146), quotes the Holy Prophet (ص) saying, "O Ali! I wish to achieve every such thing for you that I desire to acquire myself and I want to keep you away from all those things whose contact I abhor."

(iv) Allama al-Tabrani (in his book titled Al-Awsat) and Imam Hakim (in his Sahih) say that whenever the Holy Prophet (ص) was in anger nobody dared to address him but Ali.

(v) Ibn Abul-Hadid (in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 21, p. 251) once again quotes the uncle of the Holy Prophet (ص), Abbas, saying that they (the Holy Prophet [ص] and Ali) loved each other intensely. The Prophet (ص) was so fond of Ali that once when Ali was a young boy, he sent him out on some errand and the child took a long time to return, so he started getting worried and anxious; in the end, he prayed to Allah saying: Please, Lord! Do not let me die unless I see Ali again."This incident is also quoted by al-Tirmidhi.

(vi) Ali started acting as the bodyguard of the Holy Prophet (ص) even when he was just a boy of 13 or 14 years. The young men of Quraish under instigation of their parents used to stone the Holy Prophet (ص). Ali took up the work of acting as his defender. He fell upon those young men, broke the nose of one, teeth of the other, pulled the ears of the third and threw down the fourth. He often fought against those who were older than himself, was often himself hurt, but he never forsook the self imposed duty. After some days he got the nickname of "Qazeem"(one who breaks or throws away) and nobody dared to throw anything at the Holy Prophet (ص) when Ali (ع) was with him. He would not let the Holy Prophet (ص) go out of the house alone (Ayan, Vol. 3, p. 280).

Offering himself as a sacrifice at the night of Hijra (migration) and his subsequent behavior in all the battles are enough proofs of the intensity of Ali's love for the Holy Prophet (ص).

9. Character

I. Jurjy Zaidan (George Gordan) who died recently was a famous Christian historian, linguist, philosopher and poet of modern Egypt. Arabic was his mother tongue, but he was so well-versed in English, French, Germany, Persian and Latin that he used to contribute to historical and philosophical magazines of France, Germany and England. About Hazrat Ali he says the following:

"None can praise Ali (ع) to the extent that he deserves. So many instances of his piety and fear of Allah are cited that one starts loving and venerating him. He was a true, strict and scrupulous follower of Islam. His words and deeds bore stamps of nobility, sagacity and courage of conviction. He was a great man having his own independent views about life and its problems. He never deceived, misled, or betrayed anybody. In various phases and periods of his life he exhibited marvelous strength of body and mind which were due to his true faith in religion and in his sincere belief in truth and justice. He never had servants and never allowed his slaves to work hard. Often he would carry his household goods himself and if anybody offered to relieve him of the weight he would refuse."

II. The famous Egyptian philosopher and Professor of Islamics of Alazhar University, allama Muhammad Mustafa Beg Najeeb, in his equally famous book Himatul Islam [protectors of Islam] says the following: "What can be said about this Imam?! It is very difficult to fully explain his attributes and qualities. It is enough to realize that the Holy Prophet (ص) had named him the gateway of knowledge and wisdom. He was the most learned person, the most brave man and the most eloquent speaker and orator. His piety, his love of Allah, his sincerity and fortitude in following religion were of such high order that none could aspire to reach him. He was the greatest politician because he hated diplomacy in the way of injustice and loved truth and justice, his was the policy as taught by Allah. On account of his sagacity and thorough knowledge of the human mind, he always arrived at correct conclusions and never changed his views. His was of the best judgement. Had he had no fear of Allah, he would have become the greatest politician among all the Arabs. He is loved by all and everyone has a place for him in his heart. He was a

man of such surpassing and pre-eminent attributes and such transcending and peerless qualities that many learned men accepted perplexed about him and imagined him to be an incarnation of Allah. Several men among the Jews and Christians love him and such philosophers who came to know of his teachings bow down before his incomparable vast knowledge. Roman kings would have his pictures in their palaces and great warriors would engrave his name on their swords"(Himatul Islam, part I, p. 98).

III. Another philosopher and historian of Egypt, namely Prof. Muhammad Kamil Hatha, pays his tributes in the following words: His life is a agglomeration of pleasing incidents, bloody encounters and sad episodes. His personality is very prominent on account of his transcending and high qualities. Each aspect of his life is so lofty and glorious that a study of one phase would make you feel that it was the best phase of his character and the most beautiful picture of his personality, while contemplation of any other phase will enchant you more and you will come to the conclusion that no human being can attain that height and a third aspect will fascinate you equally and you will realize that before you is a personality of such great eminence that you cannot fully appreciate its greatness and you will feel that Ali (ع) was an Imam (Leader) in battlefield, was an Imam (Leader) in politics, was an Imam in religion and also an Imam in ethics, in philosophy, in literature, in learning and wisdom. It is not difficult for Allah to create such a person (a review on the character of Ali by Ustad (Professor) Muhammad Kamil Hatha, P. 40)

IV. The historian John J. Pool (author of The Life of H.M. Queen Victoria) in his book Studies in Muhammadanism makes the following points:

(i) This prince was a man of mild and forbearing character, wise in counsel and bold in war. Prophet Muhammad (ص) had given him the surname of "the Lion of Allah."

(ii) Ali (ع) and his sons Hassan (ع) and Hussain (ع) were truly noble men; men of righteousness, men of a brave, a humble and a forgiving spirit. Their lives deserve to be commemorated for there was a peculiar pathos about them (their lives) which were not spent selfishly or in vain. As Matthew Arnold (Essays in Criticism) says, "The sufferers of Kerbala' had aloft to the eyes of millions the lessons so loved by the sufferer of Cavalry (Representation of Crucifixion): 'Learn from me, for I

am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.'"He further says that Ali (ع) was the first Caliph to protect and encourage national literature. This prince was a scholar himself and many of his wise sayings and proverbs are published in a book. It is a remarkable work and deserves to be more widely read in the West.

V. Ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite commentator of Nahjul-Balagha, says the following: "Hazrat Ali had a personality in which opposite characteristics had so gathered that it was difficult to believe a human mind could manifest such a combination. He was the bravest man that history could cite and such brave persons are always hard hearted, cruel and eager for bloodshed. On the contrary Ali was kind, sympathetic, responsive and a warm-hearted person, qualities quite contradictory to the other phase of his character and more suited to pious and Allah fearing persons."

He was an extremely pious and God-fearing person and often pious and religious persons avoid society and do not care to mix with men of sins and men of wrath. Similarly, warriors, kings and dictators are usually arrogant and haughty. They consider it below themselves to mix with poor, lowly and humble persons. But Ali (ع) was different. He was a friend to all. As a matter of historical fact it is known that he had a tender spot in his heart for the poor and humble and for the orphans and the cripples. To them he was always a kind friend, a sympathetic guide and a fellow sufferer; he was meek unto them but haughty and arrogant against famous warriors and generals, so many of whom he had killed in hand to hand combat. He was always kind but strict with wayward persons, sympathetically teaching them the ways of Allah. He always smiled and passed happy and witty rejoinders, it was difficult to overcome him in any debate or repartee, his rejoinders and retorts always bore high marks of culture, education and knowledge.

He was a scion of a very illustrious, rich and noble clan, as well as son-in-law and great favorite of the Holy Prophet (ص). At the same time he was the greatest warrior and marshal of his time, yet in spite of his riches he ate, dressed and lived like a poor person. To him wealth was for the use of other needy persons, not for himself and his family. Change of times and change of circumstances did not bring any change in his bearing, mien, or character. Even when he ascended the throne of Arabia and was acclaimed as the Caliph, he was the same Ali (ع) as they had found him to be during the previous regimes. Once in the society of Abdullah, son of Imam Malik ibn Hanbal, a discussion took place about

Ali and his caliphate. Abdullah brought the discussion to an end saying that the caliphate did not bring any honor or glory to Ali, but it was itself honored and glorified by Ali and it received the status actually due to it.

Ibn Abul-Hadid also says that, in this world, an example cannot be found of any person other than Ali who was a first class warrior and a marshal, a philosopher, a moralist and a great teacher of religious principles and the ology. A study of his life shows that his sword was the only help that Islam received during its early days of struggle and its wars of self-defense. For Islam he was the first line of defense, the second line of defense and the last line of defense. Who was with him in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khundak, Khayber and Hunain? This is one aspect of his life. Yet the other phase of his character is portrayed by his sermons, orders, letters and sayings. What high values of morality they teach, what ethics they preach, what intricate problems of Unitarianism they elucidate, how rich they are in philosophy. How they try to train us to be kind, good, benevolent and Allah fearing rulers and faithful, sincere and law abiding subjects. How they persuade us to be warriors who can fight only for Allah, truth and justice and not mercenaries murdering and plundering for wealth and riches, and how they instruct us to be teachers who can teach nothing injurious and harmful to mankind. Was there any such combination before and will there ever be?

VI. To Oelsner, the famous French Orientalist and author of Les Effects de La Religion de Muhammad, Ali (ع) was the beau ideal of chivalry and the personification of gallantry, bravery and generosity.

He says the following: Pure, gentle and learned without fear and without reproach, he set for the world the noblest example of chivalrous grandeur of character. His spirit was a pure reflection of that of Muhammad (ص), it overshadowed the Islamic world and formed the animating genius of succeeding ages.

VII. Osborne, in Islam under the Arabs, says that Ali (ع) had been advised by several of his counselors to defer the dismissal of the corrupt governors previously appointed until he himself was sure against all enemies. The standard of Islam, the hero without fear and without reproach, refused to be guilty of any duplicity or compromise with injustice. This uncompromisingly noble attitude cost him his state and his life; but such was Ali, he never valued anything above justice and truth.

VIII. Gibbon, in Vol. 5 of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire says, “The zeal and virtues of Ali were never outstripped by any recent proselyte. He united the qualification of a poet, a soldier and a saint. His wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings, and every antagonist in the combats of tongue or of sword was subdued by his eloquence and valor. From the first hour of mission to the last rites of his funeral, the messenger was never forsaken by this generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent and the faithful Aaron of a second Moses.

IX. Al-Masudi, the famous historian of Islam, says, “If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the prophet in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for the faith, his intimate associate in life and his kinsman, if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teachings and of the Book, if self-abnegation and practice of justice, if honesty, purity and love of truth and if knowledge of law and science constitute a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard Ali as the foremost Muslim. We shall search in vain to find, either among his predecessor (save the Holy Prophet [ص]), or among his successor, those virtues with which Allah had endowed him.”

10. Faith

As has been declared by all the historians of Islam, since his childhood, Ali (ع) was adopted and looked after by the Holy Prophet (ص). It was only natural that his religious tendencies from his childhood were those of the Holy Prophet (ص). The question as to when he embraced Islam is out of consideration. He was Muslim from the very beginning. His religion was the religion of the Holy Prophet (ص). At his 5th, 7th, 10th, 12th and 14th year of age, he was following the religion which the Holy Prophet (ص) had at his 35th, 37th, 40th, 42nd and 44th year of his life respectively. The difference between the respective ages of the Holy Prophet (ص) and Ali was about 30 years. If the Holy Prophet (ص) at any period of his life was a non-Muslim, then Ali at that period was also a non-Muslim. This is the logic of facts. Imam Nur ad-Dīn Ali ibn Ibrahim, the Shafi’ite, in his book Al-Sira al-Halabiyya says, “Ali was like a son to the Holy Prophet (ص); therefore, his religion from the very beginning was the religion of the Holy Prophet (ص).” The famous historian Masudi says, “The general census of opinion among the Muslim historians and theologians is that Ali (ع) was never a non-Muslim and never prayed

before idols. Therefore, the question of his embracing Islam does not and cannot be raised."

11. Wife, Children and Domestic Life

Hazrat Ali (ع) was married to Hazrat Fatima (ع), the only daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص) from Hazrat Khadija. He had been betrothe d to her several days before the expedition of Badr. But the marriage was celebrated three months later, Hazrat Ali, being 21 years old and Hazrat Fatima (ع), being 15, (as stated in the Spirit of Islam), was very happy in his blessed marriage. The transcendental distinctiveness of their respective characters blended with each other so well, so much so that they never quarreled nor complained about each other, leading a happy and contented life. Each one of them was rich in his own rights. Fatima (ع) was the only heir of one of the richest women of Arabia, Khadija and had inherited many orchards and gardens in Mecca and Medina. Besides, that she was the daughter of the head of a rich clan and a king of a fast growing kingdom. Ali was a marshal who had very handsome shares from the spoils of wars. Yet all that they owned went to the poor, crippled and orphans and they themselves often starved. Their only luxury in life was prayer and the company of each other and their children. They willingly shared the sorrows and suffering of the poor. They were given a slave girl, Fizza, but the Holy Prophet (ص) had made arrangements that every alternate day was the off day of Fizza and her mistress would do all the household work. Even when Hazrat Fatima (ع) was ill on Fizza's off day, Fizza would not be allowed to attend to the duties, but Hazrat Ali would work, and the hero of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khayber and Hunain was seen grinding oats, lighting the oven, preparing the bread and looking after the children. Salman says, "What a household, the only daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص) and wife of his vicegerent leading the life of a poor laborer. If they had spent one-tenth of what they were distributing daily they would have led a life of ease and comfort. From Hazrat Ali the Lady of Light (Fatima [ع]) had four children and the fifth (Mohsin) was a still birth. The causes of this mishap and also that of her death are very sad and pathe tic incidents of their lives. The names of these four children were Hassan, Hussain, Zainab (wife of Abdullah ibn Jafar) and Umm al-Kulsoom (wife of Obaydullah ibn Jafar). During the lifetime of Hazrat Fatima (ع) (ص) Hazrat Ali did not marry another woman. After her death he married Yamama. After the latter's death, married another lady, having the name of AHanafiyya by whom he had a

son, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya. After her death, he married again, thus he had many children some of whom had unparalleled places in the history of mankind, e.g. Hassan, Hussain (ع) (the hero of Kerbala), Zainab (the defender of true Islam in Kufa and Damascus). Abbas (the commander of Hussain's army in Kerbala) and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, the hero of Nahrawan.

12. Ali Among his Friends and Foes, the Rich and the Poor

Cited below are some incidents which typically portray the characteristics of Ali ibn Abu-Talib'. He was, as Pool says, "Truly a noble man, a man of righteousness and a man of brave, humble and forgiving spirit," and as Oelsner says, "Pure, gentle and learned without fear and without reproach, setting the noblest example of character to the world." Out of hundreds and hundreds of cases to select I find it rather difficult which to choose and which not to choose. I have selected a few according to the standard of my knowledge and visualization.

I. Ali's Treatment of His Foes

(1) Talhah ibn Abu Talhah was not only a bitter enemy of Islam, but was a personal enemy of the Holy Prophet (ص) and Ali (ع). His exertions to harm these two and their mission is historically verifiable. In the battle of Uhud, he was the flag-bearer of the army of Quraish. Ali (ع) faced him and in a hand to hand encounter dealt him such a severe blow that he reeled and fell down. Ali (ع) left him like that and walked away from him. Many Muslim warriors ran up to Ali (ع) and advised him to finish Talhah, saying that he was Ali's worst enemy. Ali (ع) replied, "Enemy or no enemy, he cannot defend himself now and I cannot strike a man who is not in a status to defend himself. If he survives, he is welcome to live as long as his life-span lasts."

(2) During the Battle of Jamal, in the thick of the encounter, his slave Qambar brought him some sweet syrup saying, "My master! The sun is very hot and you have been constantly fighting, so, have a glass of this cold drink to refresh yourself."Ali (ع) looked around himself and replied, "Shall I refresh myself when hundreds of people around me are lying wounded and dying of thirst and of wounds?! Instead of bringing a sweet drink for me, take a few men with you and give each of these wounded men a cool drink."Qambar replied: "Master! But they are all our

enemies!"Ali (ع) said, "They may be, but they are human beings, so tend to them."

(3) In the battle of Siffin Muawiyah reached the river Euphrates before the army of the Imam (ع) and took status of the river. When Hazrat's army reached there he was informed that they would not be allowed a drop of water from the river. The Imam (ع) sent a messenger to Muawiyah saying that this action was against the canons of humanity and orders of Islam. Muawiyah replied saying, "A war is a war, and the rule is that one cannot accept the principles of humanity and doctrines of Islam. My sole aim is to kill Ali (ع) and to demoralize his army and this blockage of water supply will bring about these results easily and quickly."The Imam (ع) ordered Imam Hussain to attack and get back the river. The attack took place and the river-side status was captured. It was then Muawiyah's turn to beseech permission to get water from the river. His messengers arrived; Ali (ع) told them to take as much water as they liked and as often as they needed. When his officers told him that those were the very people who had refused water to them adding, "Should they be allowed a free run of the river?"He replied, "They are human beings and, even though they have acted inhumanely, I cannot follow their example and cannot refuse a man food and drink because he happens to be my worst enemy."

(4) It was the battle of Nahrawan and he himself was fighting like any other ordinary soldier. During this battle a man came to face him and in the encounter lost his sword. He realized his hopeless plight of standing before Ali (ع) without any weapon in hand. Ali's hand was raised for a blow when he saw the antagonist trembling with fear; he, therefore, lowered his hand slowly and said, "Run away, friend! You are not in a status to defend yourself." This conciliatory attitude made the man bold, so he said, "Ali! Why don't you kill me?! It would have reduced the number of your enemies by one!"Ali (ع) replied, "I do not strike a man who cannot defend himself. You are begging for your life and it was spared."The opponent got even bolder and said, "I am told that you have never refused a beggar. Now I beg you for your sword... Will you grant it to me?"Ali (ع) handed him the sword. Taking possession of the sword, the ungrateful foe said, "Now, Ali, who is going to defend you against me and save you from my killing blow?!"Ali (ع) replied, "Allah, of course; He will defend me if He so wills. He has appointed my death to be my guarding angel. None can harm me before it is opportune time is due, and

none can save me when it does arrive." Nobility of thought and action impressed Ali's foe, so he kissed the bridle of Ali's horse as he said, "O master! You are a great man, indeed. You cannot only forsake the life of your enemy in a battlefield but also you can grant him your sword. May I have the honor to act as your bodyguard and to fight for you?"Ali (ع) replied, "Friend! Fight for truth and justice and do not fight for individuals."

(5) During 39 and 40 A.H. Muawiyah organized bands of murderers and brigands to enter border towns and to carry on loot, plunder, arson and rape. Kumail was at that time the governor of Heet. He asked Hazrat Ali's permission to organize similar bands and carry out plundering in the province of Circiea which was under the control of Muawiyah. Hazrat Ali (ع) replied to him saying, "I never expected such a suggestion from a man like you. It is more noble and more moral to guard your own people and province than to plunder others. They might be our enemies, but they are also human beings. They consist of a civilian population compromised of women and children. How can one kill, loot and plunder them? No, never, do not even dream of such a venture."

(6) It was the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and the time was the morning prayers. The mosque was full of Muslims. Ali (ع) was kneeling before Allah and when he raised his head a terrible blow fell upon it giving a very deep cut. There was a great disturbance and commotion in the mosque. The murderer started running. The Muslims followed, caught and bound him in ropes and brought him before Ali (ع) who was on the prayer carpet drenched in blood and was reclining upon his sons. He knew the blow was fatal and he could not survive it but when the murderer was brought before him, he saw that the rope which had bound him was so tightly bound that it was cutting into his flesh. He turned towards those Muslims and said, "You should not be so cruel with your fellow being. Slacken his ropes. Do you not see that they are cutting into his flesh and he is in agony?"

Such was Ali (ع). Islamic history repeatedly notes well the incidents of his chivalrous and merciful treatment towards his enemies.

II. Let us see what the history says about his behavior with his friends and relatives:

1. Abdullah, a son of his brother Ja`far, was his favorite nephew whom he had raised since the death of Ja`far and to whom he had given

his most favorite daughter, Zainab, to marry. This Abdullah came to him requesting an advance installment of his share from Baytul-Mal. Ali (ع) refused and when the young man persisted, he said, "No, my son, not a day before all the others, nor one piece more!"

2. Aqil, his elder brother, was financially in a very unhappy condition, he asked for something more than his share and before the time was due. The Imam (ع) refused, saying that he could not resort to dishonesty. Aqil must wait till the time of distribution and must bear the sufferings patiently. He had cited this incident in one of his sermons.

3. Ibn Hanif was his trusted disciple and a faithful follower. He was governor of a province and was once invited to a function which was followed by sumptuous dinner. When Hazrat heard of this he wrote him a severe letter, criticizing his action and said, "You went to a dinner where only rich people were invited and the poor were scornfully excluded. This letter can be seen in Nahjul-Balagha.

III. Ali (ع) among His Servants and Slaves

He had two slaves, Qambar and Sa'id. After Ali's martyrdom, Qambar used to relate saying that he very seldom had the occasion to serve his master. The Imam (ع) used to do his work for himself, washing his own clothes and even patching them when patching was needed. He also drew water from the well for his own daily use. He would give them good food and decent dresses and would himself eat and dress like a very poor man. Let alone whipping or beating he never even got angry with us. He never used a cane even on his horse, camel or mule. These animals apparently understood his mood and desire and would trot and walk as he wished them to do. His often used phrase with them was Ago easy child' Continuing, Qambar said, "Once and only once he got annoyed with me. It was the occasion when I showed him the money that I had hoarded. It was from my share of income given to me like others from the Muslim treasury and the gifts I had received from the members of his family. I had no immediate use of it and had collected the amount. It was not much, being barely 100 dirhams. When I showed him the amount, he looked annoyed, and what caused me a greater pain was that he looked very sad. I asked him why he was so sad. He said, `Qambar! If you had no use for this money, were there not people around you who were in need of it? Some of them might have been starving and some ill and infirm, could you not have helped them? I never thought that you could be so heartless and cruel and loved wealth for the sake of wealth. Qambar! I am afraid

you are not trying to acquire much from Islam. Try more seriously and sincerely. Take these coins out of my house.' I took them out and distributed them among the beggars at the Kufa Mosque."

Sa'id says, "It was a very hot day. The Imam (ع) was writing some letters. He wanted to send me to call some of his officers. He called me once, twice and the third time. Each time I purposely remained silent and did not reply. He got up to go himself and saw me sitting not very far from him. He asked me why I did not respond to his call. I replied, `Sir! I want to find out when and how you get angry.' A smile painted itself on his lips and he replied: 'You cannot rouse my anger with such childish tricks.' Then he set me free and kept on supporting me till his death."

IV. Ali (ع) among His Subjects

(i) Once Ubaydullah ibn Abbas, when he was governor, ill-treated Banu Tamim's clan. They complained to the Imam (ع). He wrote to ibn Abbas, "You should not behave like a beast with your subjects. They are respectable people and should be treated respectfully. You are representing me and your treatment is considered as that of mine. Your first consideration should be the welfare of those over whom you rule then to treat them with due respect and consideration.

(ii) Once a group of non-Muslim subjects met the Imam (ع) and complained about Abdullah ibn Abbas treating them with contempt and scorn. They were farm tillers and agricultural laborers. It had then become a practice that non-Muslims were usually treated scornfully. The Imam (ع) wrote to Abdullah, "The agricultural population of your province complains about your harsh, contemptuous and cruel treatment. Their complaints require careful considerations. I feel they deserve a better treatment than what was met out to them. Give them a chance to approach you and meet them kindly and politely. They may be heathens and polytheists, but being your subjects and human beings, they do not deserve to be driven from us and to be treated harshly and with contempt."

(iii) Hazrat Ali (ع) was passing through Ahwaz (in present-day Iran) with his army. The rich men of the province, as was the custom of those times, came out to greet him. They offered him their best Persian horses as presents, requesting his permission to host his army. He met them very courteously. But he very politely refused to accept the gifts and

the invitation saying, "You have paid your taxes. To receive anything more from you, even when you offer it voluntarily and willingly, is a crime against the state."But when they persisted and pressed their request, he ordered that the horses could be accepted against their taxes; so far as the feast was concerned, it must be paid out of the war budget.

(iv) In the magazine Al-Hukam, Vol. 2, No. 47 of 1906, there appeared an article saying that the Russians in 1905 found an order of Hazrat Ali (ع), in his own handwriting which was in Kufic script. This was found in a monastery in Ardabil, chief town [provincial capital] of Azerbaijan. This letter was an amnesty deed to the monastery and the Christians of Ardabil. A translation of this deed appeared in the Russian newspapers, then it was translated and published in the Turkish papers as well as in the Arabic magazines of Cairo and Beirut. Many commenting articles on the spirit of toleration and the treatment of conquered by Islam were written by the Russians and by Arab Christians. Apparently, according to the magazine Al Habl al-Mateen, it was translated by Al-Hukam.

In this deed, the Imam (ع) says that as the caliph and ruler, he promises safety and security of life, property, honor, social status and religious freedom of Armenian Christians. This order should be obeyed by his officers and his successors. The Christians should not be mistreated or looked down upon because they are non-Muslims so long as they do not try to betray or harm the cause or the State of Islam. They should not be maltreated and should be allowed to practice their religion and trade freely and openly. Islam teaches us to carry a message of peace with us and improve the status of society wherever we go, and the best way to achieve this is to create amity, friendliness and concord among human beings. Therefore, Muslims should try to develop friendship of these people and should never resort to the wrong use of power, force and arrogance. They should not be over-taxed, humiliated and forced out of their homes, lands and trades. Their priests should be treated with due respect, their monasteries should be protected; they should be allowed to carry on their lectures, teachings and preaching as usual and their religious ceremonies should not be prohibited. If they want to build their places of worship, then fallow and ownerless lands should be allotted to them. One who disobeys this order, is going against the orders of Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص) and will deserve His wrath.

(v) Harith ibn Shuhail, one of the governors of the provinces was in Kufa and while riding through the city he saw Imam Ali (ع) also riding.

He got down from his horse to accompany the Imam (ع) on foot. The Imam (ع) stopped his horse and said, "It ill becomes a man to lower himself before anybody but his Allah. Please get back upon your horse. Even had you not been an officer of the State, still I would not allow you to lower yourself like this. The sight of such humiliation of man before another man never pleases me. It is the worst form of tyranny which can be practiced.

(vi) There is a letter of the Imam (ع) which is actually a system of rules and regulations for the administration of benign government and a code for higher values of morality. It is included in Nahjul-Balagha and it is referred to so very often by historians of Europe and philosophers of Arabia. Even Justice Kayani refers to it in his presidential address in Karachi on April 16, 1960, that it now needs no further introduction. In it, there are orders which show that he wanted his officers to remember that the people over whom they ruled are exclusively entrusted to them by Allah and should be treated as such.

V. Ali (ع) Among the Poor

He had a very soft corner in his heart for old, weak, infirm, disabled and poor and children were always his favorites.

(i) It was the hottest day of the season, he had finished his noon-prayers in the mosque and was passing through the bazaar when he saw a young slave-girl piteously weeping on the road. He asked her the reason. She said that her master had given her some money to get dates from the bazaar. The dates which she brought were not liked by her master and he wanted them to be returned and his money refunded. The fruit seller refused to take them back, her master was beating her for the money and seller had also caned her for going to him over and over again. She did not know what to do and whom to approach for help. The Imam (ع) accompanied her to the seller and advised him to take back the dates. He was a new comer to Kufa and did not recognize the Imam (ع) and was rude to him. A passerby intervened and told him who the Imam (ع) was. He jumped from his shop and begged of the Imam (ع) to excuse him and said that he would give back the money immediately to her. The Imam (ع) replied that it was really mean of him to treat an honest suggestion disdainfully and haughtily and to cower before power and might so abjectly and humiliatingly. The owner of the slave-girl had also heard the

news of this incident and ran to meet the Imam (ع) to apologize for the trouble caused by the slave-girl. The Imam (ع) told him, "You have no mercy for a person who is under your power and cannot forgive her mistake. Have you then a right to expect mercy and forgiveness from our Master? You, people, have acquired nothing from Islam except its name."

(ii) One day, he saw an old woman carrying a heavy load of firewood which she could ill-afford to lift. She was tottering under the weight. The Imam (ع) relieved her of her weight and carried it to her hamlet and, on her request, lit her oven for her and gave her some money. She did not know who the Imam (ع) was and was thanking him for his kindness. When a neighbor entered the hamlet, he recognized the Imam (ع) and told her who he was. Only then did she realize who had served her like an obedient servant; it was the caliph, the king.

(iii) Only after his death did the world come to know that he had provided a shelter outside of the town for a leper in an advanced stage of the disease. He used to go there daily, dress his wounds, feed him with his own hands (because the leper had lost his hands), wash him, put his bed in order and carry him out of the shelter for a little time so that he could get some fresh air. Accidentally, relatives and friends of the Imam (ع) came across this shelter, found the leper in it, learned his story and told him the Imam (ع) was murdered and that they had just buried him. The news affected the poor cripple so much that he died on the spot.

13. Ali's Diet

Imam Ali (ع) always ate the kind of food and dressed in such a way that even the poorest could afford better. It was not because he was poor but because he wanted to lead the life of the poorest person and spend all that could be spared on the poor. I have noted below certain cases quoted by the historians. These incidents are of the time when he was the ruler and king of the entire Muslim Empire except Syria.

(i) Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, in his Musnad, cited Suwayda ibn Ghaflah saying, "One day I went to see Ali (ع) at the government house (Darul Imara). It was the time of breakfast and before him there was a cup of milk and some barley bread. The bread was dry, stale, hard and did not contain any butter or oil. It could not be easily broken into pieces. The Imam (ع) was exerting himself to break and soften it. I turned towards his

slave, Fizza and said, ‘Fizza! Have you no pity on your old master? Why cannot you give him softer bread and add some butter or oil to it?’ She replied, ‘Why should I pity him when he never pities himself. He has given strict orders that nothing is to be added to his bread and even chaff and husks are not to be separated from the flour. We, ourselves, eat much better food than this, though we are his slaves.’ Hearing this, I said to him, ‘O Master! Have pity on yourself! Look at your age, your responsibilities, your hard work and your food.’ He replied: ‘O Suwayda! You have no idea what the Holy Prophet (ص) used to eat.’”He never ate to satiety for three consecutive days.

(ii) Allama Kamalud-Din Muhammad ibn Talhah al-Shafi’i, in his book titled Matalib al-Sul, quotes Abdullah ibn Zurarah saying, “I went to see Imam Ali (ع) on an Eid day. He asked me to join in his breakfast. I agreed. A very poor kind of food was served before us. I told him, O Master, you are such a rich man, a caliph and a king. I was expecting that game would be served before us but what do I see?”The Imam (ع) replied, “O Ibn Zurara! You have heard of mighty kings who have lead life of luxury. Let me be a ruler leading the life of a poor and humble person, a humble laborer.”

(iii) Al-Milani, in his book titled Sira and Imam Ahmed, in his Musnad, quote the famous tabi`i Ibn Abu Rafi saying that he went to the Imam (ع) on an Eid day and while he was sitting there a bag was brought before the Imam (ع) which he thought might contain jewels. The Imam (ع) opened the bag but it only contained dried pieces of bread, which he softened with water. Ibn Abu Rafi asked him as to the reason of sealing such a kind of food which even a beggar would not care to steal. The Imam (ع) smiled and said, “I keep it sealed because my children try to substitute softer bread, containing oil or butter in it. Ibn Abu Rafi said, “Has Allah prohibited you to eat better kind of food?”He replied, “No, but I want to eat the kind of food which the poorest of his realm can afford at least once a day. I shall improve it after I have improved their standards of life. I want to live, feel and suffer like them.”

14. His Clothing

(i) Imam Ahmed, in his book Al-Manaqib and Ibn Athir in his history book, quote Harun ibn Anzah saying that he accompanied his father (Anzah) to the Khawarnaq castle to meet Imam Ali (ع). Those were

winter days and the winter was very severe. He found the Imam (ع) in a very thin cotton garment and the cold wind was making him shiver. Anzah asked him, "O Commander of the faithful! Allah has reserved a share for you and your family from Baitul-Mal (Muslim state treasury). Why do you not make use of it?"He replied, "O Anzah! I do not want anything from your treasury; this is the same outfit which I have brought with me from Medina!"

(ii) Imam Ahmed quotes Zaid ibn Wahab saying that once the Imam (ع) came out of his house and there were patches sewn to his dress. Ibn Na`ja, a Kharijite and an enemy, was allowed by the Imam (ع) to lead a peaceful and comfortable life at Kufa taunted the Imam (ع) on the very poor and coarse kind of outfit put on by him. He replied, "Let go, what have you to find objection in my outfit? It is the kind which our masses can afford. Why can you not think of their lives and outfits?! I shall improve my standard after I have succeeded in improving theirs. Meanwhile, I shall continue to live like them. Such kind of outfit makes one feel humble and meek, it is helpful as a reminder and an encouragement to give up vanity, haughtiness and arrogance."

(iii) Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, in his books titled Kanzul-`Ummal, and al-Tabari in Al-Riyad al-Nadira, quote `Umar ibn Qais saying that once he asked the Imam (ع) as to the reason of his having patches in his outfit."He replied, "O `Umar! Such type of outfit makes you soft-hearted; it vanishes vanity from your mind and it is the kind which poor Muslims can conveniently afford."

(iv) Shaikul-Islam Imam Abu `Umar, Yousuf ibn Abdul-Birr, in his book Al-Istiab quotes Hussan ibn Jermooz saying that his father once saw the Imam (ع) coming out of the Kufa mosque in a shirt made of jute cloth. Around him were people so well dressed that compared to him they looked like princes. He was instructing them as to how they might better understand their own submission to the Will of Allah (Islam).

(v) Imam Ahmed quotes Abu Noziah, the ready-made cloth merchant of Kufa, saying that the Imam (ع) purchased two shirts from his shop, one was of superior quality, which he handed over to his slave Qambar to put on. The other was of a rough cloth, very coarse and cheap which he reserved for himself.

15. Ali's Services to Islam and the Holy Prophet (ص)

(i) The first occasion on which Ali (ع) offered his services to the cause of Islam was when the Holy Prophet (ص) was first ordered by Allah to preach Islam openly.

For three years the Holy Prophet (ص) was preaching Islam under absolute secrecy. At the end of the third year (i.e. The fourth year after the Bi`tha, dawn of Prophethood, in 45 mul-Fil), he received orders to preach to his near in kin and to admonish them. The Holy Prophet (ص) directed Ali (ع) to prepare a banquet and to invite to it the sons and grandsons of Abdul-Muttalib. This was done and about forty of them came, but Abu Lahab, made the company break up before Muhammad (ص) had an opportunity to speak. The next day a second invitation was issued. When they came and the frugal meal was served the Holy Prophet (ص) rose and declared his sacred character and offered the treasures of time and of eternity to whomsoever should become his disciples. He then concluded by demanding, "Who among you will aid me to bear this burden, who will be my Lieutenant and Vizier, just as Aaron was to Moses?"The assembly remained mute with astonishment, not one venturing to accept the offered perilous office until Ali (ع), Muhammad's cousin, stood up and exclaimed "O Prophet (ص)! I will! Though I am indeed the youngest of these present, the most rheum of them as to the eyes and the slenderest of them as to the legs; I, O Prophet (ص), will be your Vizier over them."Throwing his arms around the generous and courageous youth and pressing him to his bosom, Muhammad (ص) declared: "Behold my brother and Vizier and obey him" (see John Davenport's An Apology to Muhammad and the Holy Quran).

Many historians are of the opinion that it was a monumental declaration and indeed a momentous occasion and that Ali's declaration was the first and greatest service done in behalf of the Islamic cause. Had the appeal of the Holy Prophet (ص) been left unanswered, the propagation of Islam would have been nipped in the bud. To them the whole idea was the actualization of an adult person preaching Monotheism and Submission and a young courageous youth offering his services vehemently appeared completely foreign to the gatherings' traditional sensibilities. They laughed at both of them and dispersed, advising Ali's father to obey his youngest son from that day onward. These two, the

Holy Prophet (ص) and Imam Ali (ع) proved to the world that there was nothing laughable in their declaration. They proved to the world that their wisdom and courage was enough for Allah to make their mission a success. Carlyle says that in his opinion, young Ali (ع) had the kind of personality as could be liked, loved and venerated by everybody. He was a man of such excellent character, so loving and lovable and so intensely brave that if anything stood against his bravery it was consumed as if by fire, yet he was so gentle and kind that he represented the model of a Christian knight.

As was already said, this was really the first and the greatest service to the cause of Allah; Monotheism and Submission to His Will alone (Islam). From this day to the last day of his life, Imam Ali (ع) sincerely, bravely and nobly acted as the defender of the faith.

(ii) The second great occasion was when the Holy Prophet (ص) was forced to leave Mecca, making somebody stay in his place in such a way that his enemies would believe that he was still in his house and thus he might safely go away in the darkness of the night. This departure to Medina is called the Hijra and the Muslim era is named after this event. It took place during the month of September, 662 A.D. Thursday the 26th Safar (thirteen years after the Holy Prophet [ص] started preaching Islam). The people of Medina were favorably inclined towards Islam and some had embraced this religion and had promised every kind of support to the Holy Prophet (ص). Many Muslims had left for Medina and were handsomely treated by the Ansars of Medina. The tribesmen of Quraish, realizing that Islam was gaining a good support and a firm hold at Medina and those who had fled from Mecca were being happily settled the re, decided to strike at the root cause. Their hatred of the Holy Prophet (ص) was so intense that nothing would satisfy them but his death. They gathered at Dar al-Nadwa and decided that a few people from each clan of Quraish would jointly attack the Holy Prophet (ص) and strike him with their swords at one and the same time. Thus no individual of any single clan would be responsible of his death. Banu Hashim would not be able to kill any person in return or to fight against any single clan and as they were not strong enough to fight against all the clans of Quraish at the same time they would be forced to be satisfied with blood-money (diyya). They further decided to surround the house of the Holy Prophet (ص) during the night so that he could not get away then to kill him the next morning. Thus forty men got ready and surrounded his house. Allah revealed to His Messenger of the intrigue planned against him and

ordered him to leave Mecca the very same night. It was a serious and dangerous occasion. He was ordered by Allah to go and to go in such a way that none of his enemies might suspect his departure and, if possible, none of his friends might know of it. The walls of his house were barely seven feet high and anyone placing a stone and standing upon it could easily peep into the house. He knew the house was surrounded. Anyone whom he asked to sleep in his bed covering himself with the Prophet (ص) s coverlet. Such a person was expected not to expose his identity till dawn (by which time the Prophet (ص) would be safe and out of danger). This person was also to be unarmed so that he might not rouse the suspicion of the peeping enemies. He should thus be willing to bear the brunt of the enemies' anger in the morning and be ready to be killed. To whom but Ali (ع) could be Holy Prophet (ص) turn at this most dangerous moment? In detail he informed Ali (ع) of the whole plan and of the positive danger of taking his place in details saying that the least that could be expected of those enemies would be death and torture. Ali (ع) asked, "I take your place and leave you alone to go through the gathered enemies, will your life be safe?""Yes,"replied the Holy Prophet (ص). Allah has promised me a safe passage through them. Ali (ع) bowed his head before Allah as a sign of thanksgiving. He lied down on the bed of the Holy Prophet (ص) and covered himself with the Prophet's coverlet. During the night, many stones and arrows were aimed at him. Stones hit him in the back and on the head and arrows embedded in his legs but he did not even turn in his bed. In the morning he was found out by the enemies only when one of them pulled back the coverlet. When they wanted to attack him, knowing that he was Ali (ع) not Muhammad (ص), only then did he unsheathe his sword.

In Medina, the Holy Prophet (ص) was forced to defend himself and his followers and was thus forced to fight many battles. At each and every battle Ali (ع) was the hero. And it was he who fought single-handedly with the famous warriors of Arabia, defeated the enemies and brought a victory to Islam.

Records of these battles carry with them chronicles of his bravery, courage and chivalry. Even the enemies sang songs of his valor and gallantry.

Everyone of these battles was an outcome of very grave circumstances and conditions and a complex combination of intricately

serious events initiated by quite real and extremely harmful forces launched against the peace and well being of Muslims and Islam. There were many such encounters but I have briefly mentioned only five of those instances where the events had far reaching effects. In each of them Ali (ع) alone broke through evil combinations and carried the Muslims and Islam to a status of safety, eminence and power.

(iii) The first of these battles was Badr. It took place in the month of Ramadan of the 2nd year of Hijra. Muslims were not prepared for a battle and could ill-afford to fight against superior forces. But Medina was being invaded and the Holy Prophet (ص) was necessarily forced to defend himself and his followers. He decided to leave Medina and fight out the battle in an open field. He had only 313 Muslims who were not adequately armed for a battle, many of them were nervous of an encounter and were suffering from inferiority complex. The tribesmen of Quraish had come with an army of about 1000 warriors which had frightened the Muslims even more. The battle took place and about 36 Quraish were killed by Ali (ع); some of them were very important persons and famous warriors of the tribesmen of Quraish.

Ali (ع) killed everyone of those 36 antagonists in hand to hand combat and most of them were the persons who had surrounded the house of Holy Prophet (ص) on the night of the Hijra. During this encounter he was wounded, but by his bravery and courage he brought home to Muslims that he would act as the first line of defense for Islam, that they had no cause to suffer from inferiority complexes and that Allah would defend them against heavy odds. Among the tribesmen of Quraish were two of the worst enemies of Islam, Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan, and in this battle Abu Jahl was killed. Ali (ع) was the hero of this battle and brought the first victory in Islam in armed encounters with its enemies.

(iv) The second most important battle was that of Uhud. The tribesmen of Quraish and their leader Abu Sufyan were smarting under the defeat of Badr and had sworn to retaliate. The idolaters were burning for revenge. They made formidable preparations for another encounter and succeeded in obtaining the assistance of Tihama and Kinana tribes. Abu Sufyan's wife, Hind, mother of Muawiyah, took a keen interest in all arrangements and preparations. She had written poems to entice Quraish against Islam and had organized a band of women minstrels who accompanied the army of Quraish to the battlefield. Thus they had mobilized an army of 3000 infantry and 2000 cavalry. The Holy Prophet

(ص) could muster only 700 Muslims to face this horde. They faced each other in the battlefield of Uhud. The battle took place on the 11th Shawal 3 A.H. (a year after the battle of Badr). The command of the Muslim army was divided between Ali (ع) and Hamza and Abu Sufyan had appointed Khalid ibn al-Walid, Akram ibn Abu Jahl and `Umar ibn al-s as the three commanders to command the right wing, left wing and the center respectively.

The first encounter took place between Ali (ع) and Talhah ibn Talhah. This encounter carries with it an incident of marvelous chivalry by Ali (ع), which I have narrated elsewhere. Talhah suffered defeat at the hands of Ali (ع) and died. He was the flag bearer of Quraish's army. His death brought his four sons and one grandson to face Ali (ع) and each one of them was killed by him. As other flag bearers followed them, they were in turn killed by Ali (ع). Then a general encounter took place in which Ali (ع) and Hamza carried the day and the Muslims were victorious. ABut eagerness of spoils threw the ranks of the Muslim army into disorder, Ali (ع) however tried to keep them in order, but it was not to be. Khalid ibn al-Walīd immediately attacked them from the rear and the flank. He wounded the Holy Prophet (ص) with a javelin and had also stoned him. The face of the Prophet (ص) was also wounded and he had fallen down from the horse. Khalid ibn al-Walid started shouting with a loud voice: "The lying Prophet is slain!"Without stopping to verify this claim, the followers of Islam fled, panic-stricken (Davenport). The wounded Prophet (ص) was left in the battlefield with only Ali (ع), Hamzah, Abu Dujanah and Thakwan to defend him. These brave warriors fought fiercely and during this encounter, Hamzah was killed, Thakwan and Abu Dajana lay seriously wounded and Ali (ع) was left alone in the battlefield. He had received 16 wounds but he searched and found the Holy Prophet (ص) lying wounded and surrounded by enemies under command of Khalid who were trying to kill him. He fought against these six men, killed two of them and scattered the rest. He bodily lifted the Holy Prophet (ص) and carried him to a mount while he kept on attacking the rallying armies of the enemy and shouted that Athe Holy Prophet (ص) is alive! and calling Muslims to "Come back!"Those Muslims who had not fled very far came back and saw the wounded Prophet (ص) with his daughter, Fatima (ع) (who had come out of Medina upon hearing the rumor of her father's death) to look after him. They took heart and

gathered again under the command of Ali (ع) and starting to fight again, victory was gained. The most peculiar aspect of this battle was that the greed of the Muslim warriors had converted a hard-earned victory into a ignominious defeat and Ali (ع) had reconverted this defeat into a glorious victory. He thus once again saved the day by saving the face of the fleeing Muslims. Most important of all, he saved was the life of the Holy Prophet (ص), for without Ali (ع) the Holy Prophet (ص) would have been killed.

Twenty-eight famous warriors of Arabia were killed by Ali (ع) in this battle of whom seventeen were flag bearers of the tribesmen of Quraish. The Holy Prophet (ص) declared that the Angel Gabriel was loud in the praise of Ali (ع) and had said, "There is no braver youth than Ali (ع) and no better sword than his Dhul-Fiqar."A detailed account of this battle is available in

1. Al-Waqidi's History of Prophets
2. Shah Isma'il al-Hamawini's History
3. Tabari's Tarikh

(v) The third momentous armed encounter of the Muslims with the tribesmen of Quraish is called the battle of the clans (Ahzab) or battle of themoat or ditch (Khandaq). It is so called because many clans of Arabs were persuaded by Abu Sufyan to help him to annihilate Islam and the Muslims. Because these forces invaded Medina, the Holy Prophet (ص) was obliged to dig a moat or ditch around his army. This battle also proves that the Holy Prophet (ص) was forced to take up arms in defense of his followers and his mission. It took place on the 23rd of Dhul-Qi`da in the year 5 A.H.

The defeat at Uhud was a crushing blow to the tribesmen of Quraish and to their leader, Abu Sufyan. While retreating from Uhud, he promised that he would come back again to avenge the defeat. He instigated the clans of Banu al-Nazir, Banu Ghatfan, Banu Sleem and Banu Kinanah and also succeeded in persuading Banu Qurayzah who, till then, had not sided with any party, to join their forces against Islam. Abu Sufyan was very sure of his success. He especially relied upon the fame of Umar ibn Abd Wudd, who was as famous in Arabia as Rustam was in Iran. He had gathered an army of about 9 to 10 thousand soldiers under command of this famous warrior.

They marched upon Medīna, the Holy Prophet (ص) could barely muster 2000 Muslims to face this army. For nearly a month the armies stood facing each other and one day `Umar jumped themoat and faced the Muslim army, challenging them for an encounter. He was accompanied by Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, Abdullah ibn al-Mugheerah, Zurarah ibn al-Khattab, Nawfal ibn Abdullah and others. His bravery, valor and courage were so well known in Arabia that none of the Muslims except Ali (ع) dared face him. The assemblage of famous warrior tribes and the presence of `Amr ibn Abd Wudd as their commander had made the Muslims so nervous that even the Holy Quran says that "Their eyes were petrified, their hearts were beating violently,"and they were thinking of running away. Thrice did `Amr ibn Abd Wudd challenge them, and every time, none but Ali (ع) stood up and asked permission of the Holy Prophet (ص) to face him. Twice did the Holy Prophet (ص) refuse him permission, but in the end he allowed him saying, "Today, faith in embodiment is facing embodied infidelity,"then he raised his hands in prayers, beseeching Allah thus: "O Lord! I am sending Ali (ع) alone in the battlefield, do not allow me to be left alone; You are the best Companion and the best Guardian."Muslims were so certain of Ali (ع) being killed by `Amr that some of them came forward to have a last look at his face. The encounter ended in Ali's success and Omer's death. After `Amr, he faced Abdullah ibn Mughirah and Nawfal ibn Abdullah, killing them both. Thus, a victory was won without any Muslims, except Ali (ع), coming out of the ranks. In the encounter with `Amr and the defeat and death of this great warrior, Ali (ع) again exhibited such a chivalrous attitude that the sister of Amr composed a poem in praise of the man who faced her brother, fought him bravely and demonstrated such a noble and chivalrous tribute to his subdued enemy. In it she said that if anyone else other than Ali (ع) had killed her brother, she would have wept over the infamy for the rest of her life. The death of Amr had completely demoralized the various clans gathered; they started leaving the army in retreat, going back to their localities. The tribesmen of Quraishites went back to Mecca sad and dejected.

Thus, Ali (ع) brought an end to the hostilities of Quraish in three encounters at Badr, Uhud and Khandaq. Their best warriors were killed, their unity against Islam was crushed, their pride was humiliated and their prestige before the Arab clans was lowered by him and by him alone.

He further raised the status of Muslims among the haughty, merciless and warring tribes of Arabia. In all of these three battles not more than sixty Muslims were killed. He alone had killed more than seventy enemies of Islam, everyone of whom was the head of some clan or a sub-clan, a warrior famous for his bravery or a deadly enemy of the Holy Prophet (ص) and Islam.

For a detailed account of this battle following books may be consulted:

1. Shah Waliyyullah Dehlawi's Ithbatul-Ghafa'.
2. Kamil ibn al-Athir'r History, Vol. 2.
3. Al-Sayyuti's Al-Durr al-Manthur.
4. Tabari's Tarikh.

(vi) In their struggle for existence, the Muslims had to face a very serious opposition from the Jews. In the beginning they tried to help the tribesmen of Quraish against Islam surreptitiously then openly. But when Ali (ع) broke through the enmity of the tribesmen of Quraish and when the Holy Prophet (ص) was forced to banish the Jews from Medina, they decided to try their fate against Islam with the help of Banu Asad, Banu Kinanah and Banu Ghatfan. Khayber was the province which they had occupied since the times of their banishment from Palestine[108]. It contained a few fortresses, the biggest of them was called Qamos, which was on a steep hill. In these fortresses, they started gathering in large numbers. After raising an army of 10 to 12 thousand warriors their misguided venture was to include a march on Medina. Hearing this serious news the Holy Prophet (ص) decided to face them at Khayber only. He marched at the head of an army of 3,000 soldiers. This battle took place in Muharram of the year 7 A.H.

Ali (ع) then was suffering from an eye problem and was left at Medīna. The Muslim army succeeded in defeating the Jews in minor skirmishes, but when they tried to capture the main fort of Qamos, they suffered a setback. They could not succeed though they tried for days at a stretch. The defeats sustained sadly demoralizing the Muslim army. Holy Prophet (ص) had allowed every important person to command the Muslim forces day by day. Yet each day the result was fresh defeat, fresh

[108]There are two theories as to what brought those Jews to Medina. One says they went there from Jerusalem fleeing the persecution of the Romans. Another says they fled the persecution of fanatical rulers of Yemen who were appointed by the then Ethiopian empire, at the time fanatically Christian. – Ed.

demoralization, fresh boldness of Jews and daily increasing danger of some more clans, emboldened by the weakness and defeats of Muslims, joining hands with the Jews. There were still many such tribes who were deadly against Islam and wanted to harm it, but Muslims victories at Badr, Uhud and Khandaq had made them nervous. The news of the defeats at Khayber were making them bold. "The Jews of Khayber united by an ancient alliance with a Beduin horde of Banu Ghatfan were incessantly working for the formation of a powerful coalition against the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (ص) knew fully well the power possessed by the desert races to injure the Muslims" (The Spirit of Islam). There was further danger of the munafiqun (hypocrites and double dealers) staging a rebellion in Medina. Prompt measures were needed to avert these evils. Only a victory could have saved the situation which was getting more and more critical day by day. The Prophet (ص) was himself ill and sadly felt the need of Ali (ع) at his side. He knew that although he himself was ill, Ali (ع) had not left him alone and had followed him., therefore, ill or not ill Ali (ع) had to come to the succor of Muslims, Islam and the Holy Prophet (ص). When thenews of the last disastrous repulses of the Muslims were brought to him, the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "Tomorrow I shall give the command (the flag, an insignia of the command) of this army to a man who is brave, who will keep on attacking, who will not run away from the battlefield, who loves Allah and His Prophet (ص) and is beloved by Allah and His Prophet (ص). He will not come back to me without success. The next day, Ali (ع) was called from his bed and was handed over the command. He took the fort by storm; killed Marhab, Antar, Murrah, al-Harith and four other tribal chieftains of the Jews in hand to hand combat. He broke the door of the fort single-handedly, carried his army inside the fort and within four hours he flew the flag of the Holy Prophet (ص) on the biggest fortress of Arabia. He once again moved the cause of Allah ever closer towards an ultimate Islamic Victory at the hands of Muslims and on that day saved Islam from disastrous ends.

the news of success pleased the Holy Prophet (ص) so much that he, though ill, came out to greet the victor, embraced him said, "Ali (ع) had I not been afraid that Muslims will start regarding you as Christians regard the Christ, I would have said things about you which would have made the Muslims venerate you and to consider the dust of your feet as something worth venerating. But it will suffice to say that you are from me and I am from you; you will inherit me and I will inherit you; you are unto me what Aaron was unto Moses. You will fight for my cause, you

will be nearest to me on the day of Judgement and you will be next to me on the fountain of Kawthar. Enmity against you is enmity against me; a war against you is a war against me; your friendship is my friendship. To be at peace with you is to be at peace with me; your flesh is my flesh; your blood is my blood; who will obey you will obey me. Truth is on your tongue, in your heart and in your mind. You have as much faith in Allah as I have. You are a door to me. As per orders of Allah I give you these tidings that your friends will be rewarded in the Heaven and your enemies will be punished in the Hell.

For further details of the above hadith and the battle of Khayber, following books may be consulted:

1. Maarij al-Nubuwwa, Vol. 4, p. 216.
2. The Manaqib of Akthab al-Kharzami
3. Mullah Ali Hamdani's Yanabi' al-Mawadda
4. Ibn Hisham's Sira, p. 187
5. Tabari's Tarikh.

(vii) the victory which Ali (ع) brought to Islam in Khayber proved of great consequence to its mission and its followers. It gave such an importance and prestige over the infidels of the tribesmen of Quraish that the y, who till then had complete control and sway over Mecca and did not even allow the Holy Prophet (ص) and his followers to come for hajj and umra and had forced them for the treaty of Hudaybiya, were now obliged to surrender the city to him. Mecca fell before the superior forces of Islam.

The causes of the invasion and fall of Mecca are not to be discussed here. Suffice it to say that Abu Sufyan who had brought it all upon the heads of Quraish, later leaving the country and countrymen to the devil, started running after every important person to secure his own and his family's freedom of life and property from the Holy Prophet (ص). Through the mediation of Abbas (uncle of Holy Prophet [ص]) he received the pardon that he sought. The behavior of the Holy Prophet (ص) against these murderers of Muslims and the enemies of Islam was so merciful, benign and humane that he pardoned everyone of them, a clemency and kindness which was and shall ever remain unparalleled in the history of mankind. When Mecca was taken over by the Muslims, the precincts of Kaba were cleared of all idols by the person of the Holy Prophet (ص) and

Ali (ع) and it ceased to exist as the center of infidelity and polytheism in Arabia.

The fall of Mecca which took place in the Ramadan of 8 A.H. (January 630 A.D.) was accompanied with serious repercussions. The success of Islam since the Hijra had brought many followers to its fold. These were of three types. Some had seen the truth in its preaching and had accepted it sincerely and faithfully. Some were such that they wanted to bask in the glory of a religion which was fast becoming a mighty temporal power and they wished to make their worldly positions good through its influence and had accepted it with those ulterior motives. While there were some whose conversion was under false impression that unless they had accepted Islam their lives and properties were not safe. The fall of Mecca had a very sad effect upon those two latter groups. They were not expecting that Abu Sufyan and the tribesmen of Quraish would succumb so easily to the pressure of Muslim invasion. The clearing of idols from the precincts of Ka`ba and closing its doors to the infidels was a heavy blow. It became more poignant when they found out their age-long enemy, the man whose valor and whose sword brought all these victories to Islam as well as disastrous defeats to their side, Ali (ع) was the flag bearer a (commander) of the Holy Prophet's (ص) forces on the occasion of the fall of Mecca. Along with the Holy Prophet (ص) he was the man who cleared the Ka`ba of its idols. There still were many polytheist clans in Arabia. To them Mecca was the center of worship. Among them there were two powerful bedouin tribes; Banu Hawazin and Banu Thaqif. They now were joined by Banu Nusair, Banu Sa`d, Banu Hashim and Banu Hilal. Those tribes decided to stage a comeback and were quietly promised help by the hypocrites.

(viii) the whole thing was arranged so quickly and so stealthily that by the time the Muslims could come out of the sweet pleasure of success at Mecca there was an army of 20,000 warriors at Tayef ready to face them. The Holy Prophet (ص) marched to Ta'if at the head of an army of 15,000 Muslims. Some of them were freed slaves of the Muslim's conquest of Mecca and many more were the hypocrites of the types mentioned above. There were a few thousand of those Muslims who had accompanied him from Medina.

The hostile tribes decided to attack the Muslim army at a point of vantage at Hunain and selected two prominent locations where they concealed their archers. The Muslims were very proud of their strength and were very sure of their success, but their behavior during the

encounter was shamelessly timorous and cowardly. The Almighty discussing their attitude in this battle says, "Allah came to your help on so many occasions. Yet, on the day of Hunain, your vanity in the number of your soldiers and your arrogance did not prove of any avail to you, you were badly defeated and could not find any place of shelter. You started running away without shame (section 9, Tawba).

This encounter took place in the month of Shawwal 8, A.H. (January/February 630 AD). When the Muslim army marched towards the place where the archers were concealed the enemy opened the campaign with such a severe onslaught of their archery that the Muslim army could not stand it. The assault was fierce and the confusion in the Muslim ranks made the archers bolder and they came nearer and attacked from both flanks and from the front. The Muslims could not stand the attack any longer. They started running without putting up any resistance and had lost their senses and touch with reality so much that they even left the Holy Prophet (ص) unprotected beyond their cares (Bukhari's Sahih).

The first battalion to run in trouble was the one commanded by Khalid ibn al-Walid (Rawzat al-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 137, Tarikh al-Anbiya, Vol. 2 p. 388). He was accompanied by Banu Saleem and the recently converted Quraish of Mecca. This was followed by such a disorderly and tumultuous flight of Muslims that only ten persons out of an army of 15,000 were left with the Holy Prophet (ص). Eight of them were Banu Hashim (Abbas and his two sons, Ali (ع), Aqil and three other cousins of the Holy Prophet (ص).

Abbas was shouting at the Muslims to return, reminding them of oaths of allegiance taken and promises made, but it was of no avail. Those who had accepted Islam for wealth and power or under false fears were not willing to risk their lives. They ran as fast as they could. Many of them who had carefully hidden their enmity of the rising power were happy at the defeat. They gathered around Abu Sufyan, started congratulating him and saying that AThe magical spell of the lying prophet is broken! they were praying for the comeback of polytheism (Abul-Fida, p. 349, Rawzat al-Safa, p. 136 Vol. 2, Tarikh al-Anbiya', p. 389 Vol. 2).

Once again it fell to the lot of Ali (ع) to save the Holy Prophet (ص) and Islam. Armies of Banu Hawazin and Banu Thaqif under the cover of their archers were rushing down the hillock and were getting

ready for a fierce onslaught. Ali (ع) divided the small band of faithful Muslims in three divisions; to Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib and his nephew Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith, he assigned the duty of guarding the Holy Prophet (ص). To three others he gave orders to guard the rear while he faced the onslaught with only three warriors along with him. He fought and fought, was wounded, but faced the commander of the hostile army, Abu Jerdal in a hand to hand combat and killed him with one stroke of sword. He attacked the enemy's rank once again, bringing the number of those whom he had slain on that day to forty. His aides had a glorious example before them. They also fought bravely, killing thirty more men.

The day was saved, the commander of the enemy's army was killed, their ranks were broken, they had no courage to face Ali (ع) and started retreating. The sight of a powerful enemy under retreat made the fleeing Muslims bold and they came back afterwards as victory was won for them.

A detailed account of this encounter is to be found in
1. Rawzat al-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 136.
2. Tarikh al-Anbiya', Vol. 2, p. 388
3. Sirat ibn Hisham, Vol. 2, p. 621
4. Kunzul-Ummal, Vol. 5, p. 307

(ix) During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (ص), Imam Ali (ع) was sent on many occasions for the propagation of Islam and on many missions of mercy and peace. He carried out these duties to the satisfaction of the Holy Prophet (ص) and Allah. For instance in the words of AThe Spirit of Islam, AThe men of Khalid ibn al-Walid, under the order of this newly converted warrior killed Banu Khazimah's bedouins. The news of this wanton bloodshed deeply grieved the Prophet (ص) and he prayed "O Master! I am innocent of what Khalid has done. He immediately dispatched Imam Ali (ع) to make every possible preparation for the outrage committed. Such a mission was congenial to Ali's nature and he executed it faithfully. After making a careful enquiry as to the number of persons killed, their status and the losses incurred by their families and paid the diyya strictly. When every loss was made good he distributed the remainder of the money he had brought among the kinsman of the victims of other members of the tribe. This gladdened every heart by his gentleness and benevolence and while carrying with

him the blessings of the whole people, he returned to the prophet who overwhelmed him with praises and thanks.

Similarly in 8 A.H. when other missions failed to bring the powerful Yemeni tribe of Banu Hamdan to the folds of Islam, Ali (ع) was sent the re. Ibn Khaldun says that on the first occasion he gathered the tribesmen some of whom were very learned and spoke before them of the truths which Islam preached. This sermon was so effective that some of those learned persons immediately embraced Islam. This was followed by long discussions with others. He made them realize the rationality of the doctrines of Islam. The discussions ended in the whole-hearted conversion of Banu Hamdan, who followed their learned leaders. This news pleased the Holy Prophet (ص) to the extent that he bowed down before Allah in thanks and thrice said, "Peace be to Banu Hamdan and to Ali (ع). Again in 10 A.H. his sermons and preaching proved so effective that the whole province embraced Islam as one entity.

16. Appointment of Ali (ع) as the Prophet's Vicegerent

It is generally supposed that the Holy Prophet (ص) had not expressly designated anyone as his successor in the spiritual and temporal government. Yet this notion is framed on an incorrect apprehension of fact, for there is abundant testimony that many times the Prophet (ص) had openly indicated Ali (ع) as his successor (see The Spirit of Islam, p. 292).

(i) The first occasion was when he was ordered by Allah to openly and unreservedly invite his kith and kin to Islam. This occasion is called Adawat al-asheera (inviting the relatives to Islam). In the words of Rev. Sale, the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "Allah has commanded me to call you unto Him; who therefore, among you will be assisting to me herein and become my brother and my vicegerent? All of them hesitating and declining the matter, Ali (ع) at length rose up and declared that he would be his assistant and threatened those who should oppose him. Muhammad (ص), upon this, embraced Ali (ع) with great demonstration of affection and desired all those present to listen to and to obey him as his Deputy.

Thus, at this occasion of the introduction of Islam as a religion Imām Ali (ع) was declared by the Holy Prophet (ص) as his Deputy. The value of Ali's support to the Holy Prophet (ص) and his designation as a

vicegerent at this stage is fairly well assessed by theologians, historians and thinkers of the West and the East. Refer to:

1. Al-Tabari's Tafsir, Vol. 19, p. 68.
2. Tafsir Ma'alim al-Tanzil, p. 663.
3. Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal Vol. I p. 163.
4. Mustadrak Imam Hakim Vol. 2I p. 133.
5. Tarikh of Tabari Vol. 2 p. 216.
6.Al-Tarikh al-Kamil, Vol. 2 p. 26.
7.Tarikh of Abul-Fida', Vol. I p. 116.

(ii) The second occasion was at the time of Ali's conquest of Khayber. The words of the Holy Prophet (ص) quite clearly, positively and expressively give his opinion about Imam Ali (ع) and his desire to leave Imam Ali (ع) as the guardian and the propagator of his mission. He said, "You are from me and I am from you, you will inherit me. You are unto me what Aaron was unto Moses. You will be nearest to me on the day of Judgement and next to me on the fountain of Kawthar, enmity against you is enmity against me, a war against you is a war against me. You have as much faith in Allah as I have. You are a door to me" (refer to p. 26 the Battle of Khayber). What more can one say?! Can there be anything more forceful, more eloquent, more pregnant with clear indications and more categorical than the words which the Holy Prophet (ص) has used? Do they leave any shadow of doubt? Has the Holy Prophet (ص) ever used such words for anybody else?

(iii) The third instance was the occasion of the invasion of Tabuk. To understand the occasion and the cause of remarks of the Holy Prophet (ص) it is necessary to know the historical background of the incident. It was the summer of 9 A.H. And the Holy Prophet (ص) had received the information that the Roman King was mobilizing his forces to invade the Islamic State and many Arab tribes were gathering round him. He decided to face them in their own land and not to allow them the run of the Muslim state so that they may not lay waste to the lands through which they would pass. The situation had become very serious because there was famine in Hijaz, Ta'if and Yemen. The Hypocrites (the munafeqeen) were carrying on an intensive propaganda campaign to try to make the people believe that the famine was the sign that Allah was angry with Muslims and wants to exterminate them with the worst form of death. And in the case of a defeat against the Roman armies, there was an imminent danger of a rebellion. It was imperative that the state should be

left in the hands of a faithful and powerful guardian; otherwise, there was every possibility of being sandwiched between the two enemies. The Holy Prophet (ص), therefore, decided that Imam Ali (ع) should act as a regent in his place so the world might realize that in the opinion of the Holy Prophet (ص), none could look after the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of the Muslims during his absence but Ali (ع). He called Ali (ع) and told him that he would have to act as the last line of defense for him and Islam, saying "O Ali! Nobody could look after the center of the Muslim state but you or I. (Imam Hakim in Mustadrak, Allama ibn Abdul-Birr in Isti`ab, Shah Waliyyullah in Izalatul-Khafa', Sibt ibn al-Jawzi in Tadhkiratul-Khawass and Allama al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in Kanzul-Ummal). Imam Ali's stay at Medina disappointed the Amunafiqun (hypocrites) as they constituted themajority of those left behind by the Holy Prophet (ص). They claimed that the Prophet (ص) had lost faith in Imam Ali (ع) and had, therefore, left him behind and that it was positively certain that the Holy Prophet (ص) was going to suffer a defeat. Imam Ali (ع) naturally felt anxious for the Holy Prophet (ص) and annoyed at aspersions against him. He left Medina immediately, met the Prophet (ص) at the place of Jerf and told him all that was said at his back. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "Ali! They shall lie against you as they have lied against me. They have called me an epileptic, a magician, a sorcerer and a necromantic and have always portrayed me as a liar. I have appointed you as my vicegerent and my caliph over all those whom I have left behind. Are you not satisfied to realize that you are to me like Aaron was to Moses?" (Bukhari's Sahih, Ch. 145, p. 387 and Ch. 18, p. 89).

(IV) The fourth time was (in the wording of the Spirit of Islam): "Notably the occasion of the return journey from the performance of the Farewell Pilgrimage, during a halt at a place called Khumm, the Prophet (ص) had assembled the people accompanying him, using the words which could left little doubt about his intention regarding his successor, Ali (ع). He (ص) said, "To me, Ali (ع) is what Aaron was to Moses. O Allah! Be the friend of his friends and the foe of his foes; help those who help him and frustrate those who betray him"(The Spirit of Islam, p. 292).

I would be doing a great disservice to the cause of the truth and to the history of Islam if I do not sketch at least an outline of this incident. More than fifty thousand people had gathered on that occasion, and many of them narrated all that took place there. Among those narrators we find such luminaries as Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman, al-Zubair ibn al-Awwam,

Abdullah ibn Umar, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Mother of the Faithful Aisha, Mother of the Faithful Umm Salamah, Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and Hassan ibn Thabit. The book Arjahul-Matalib cites 100 names of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) [who testify to the Ghadir Khumm incident]. There are about 153 historians and collectors of the Holy Prophet's traditions and authors of Sihah books, mu`jams and musnads from the 1st Century A.H. right up to 1300 A.H. who have all narrated the entire incident in detail and have drawn practically the same inference as the author of The Spirit of Islam. The book Arjahul-Matalib again gives a list of them in chronological order of 13 centuries, from which I have quoted a few names at the end of this section.

Here is the incident in more details:

In 10 A.H./632 A.D., immediately following ijjatul-Wada` (the Farewell Pilgrimage, the last pilgrimage performed by Prophet Muammed [ص]), a divine order was revealed to the Prophet to convey the remaining Islamic tenets: the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and the Imamate of the Twelve Infallible Imams. The Prophet called upon the faithful to accompany him on his last pilgrimage; he knew that it would be his last and that he would soon have to leave this temporary abode for the eternal one. More than one hundred and twenty thousand Muslims responded to his call.

The Prophet and his company put on the iram garbs at the appropriate time at Masjid al-Shajara, a short distance from Mecca, his birthplace, which he entered on Dhul-ijja 5, 10 A.H./March 6, 632 A.D. The Prophet's call reached Yemen where `Ali ibn Abu alib (ع) was acting as his representative. Twelve thousand Yemenite pilgrims came out headed by Ali (ع) in response to the Prophet's call to accompany him on his historic Pilgrimage, bringing the total number of those early pilgrims to more than one hundred and thirty-two thousand.

The Islamic pilgrimage starts in the month of Dhul-ijja (month of the pilgrimage), the last Islamic lunar calendar month, and continues for at least ten days. First, each pilgrim dons a special garb called iram; males' iram consists of two white sheets or towels covering the upper and lower parts of the body, whereas females wear a full white cotton outfit, simple and modest. This iram reminds the pilgrim of his/her death and of the equality of all before God. All pilgrims perform the same rituals; none receives any favourable treatment or distinction on account of his status, power, or wealth. The pilgrimage starts by the awaf: the circling of the

Kaba seven times. The Kaba is identified in Islamic literature as an earthly counterpart to the Almighty's Throne (`Arsh) in heaven where the angels circle it in adoration. Likewise, in imitation of those angels, Muslim pilgrims circle the Kaba in adoration of their Lord. The awaf is followed by the sai: the pilgrims run back and forth seven times between the afa and the Marwa in commemoration of Hagar (Hajar), mother of Ishmael, frantically searching for water for her newborn son Ishmael. After that, the pilgrims drink of the well of Zamzam which had appeared miraculously for Hagar and Ishmael, wash with it or use it to make ablution for prayers at the Kaba but never to use it in the toilet; Zamzam is too sacred for such an application. Then the pilgrims leave Mecca for Muzdalifa, Arafa, and finally Mina to perform certain rites which fall outside the scope of this book which is intended to be a historical account of the Prophet of Islam, not one of fiqh. The author is a writer, a researcher, someone who, according to a friend of mine, "insists on finding out who the foundling's father is!" But he is not a faqih. Now let us go back to our original story after having cast a glimpse at the rite of the pilgrimage in Islam.

It was at Arafa that the divine command was received by Prophet Muammad (ص) to appoint `Ali (ع) as "Amirul-Mu'minin[109]," the Commander of the Faithful, title of the bearer of the highest temporal and religious powers in the Islamic State, one reserved solely for caliphs, those who are supposed to be the most knowledgeable of all people of secular and religious problems and of how to solve them. Muammad (ص) was also ordered to convey to Ali (ع) the knowledge which the Almighty had bestowed upon him so that it would not be lost once he is dead. In Mina, the Prophet (ص) delivered two sermons in preparation of the great announcement to come. In the first, he referred to Ali's caliphate and reminded the audience of one particular adith which he had conveyed to them on various occasions and which is identified in books of hadith as "adith al-thaqalain," tradition of the two weighty things (the first being the Holy Quran and the second being the Prophet's Progeny, the "Ahl al-Bayt" mentioned in verse 33 of Chapter 33 [al-Azab] of the Holy Quran). He delivered his second sermon at Masjid al-Khaif, also located in Mina in the Meccan valley. In it, the Prophet reminded his audience of Ali's Imamate, emphasizing the necessity of disseminating the contents of his sermon, announcing that those present were duty-bound to convey it to

[1091]Linguistically, the meaning of "Amirul-Mu'minin" is: the one who bestows knowledge on the believers, the one who "mirs" (pours knowledge upon) them.

those who were absent. In both of these sermons, the Prophet publicly vested upon Ali (ع) both powers referred to above.

As soon as the rituals of the pilgrimage were completed, and to be exact on Dhul-ijja 17, 10 A.H./March 18, 632 A.D., the divine order came to the Prophet embedded in verse 67 of Chapter 5 (al-Ma'ida) quoted in the text of the Prophet's sermon to follow. The Prophet immediately ordered Bilal ibn Raba, his caller to prayers and one of his faithful aaba, to convey the following order to the faithful: "Tomorrow, nobody should lag behind but should go to Ghadir Khumm."

The word "ghadir" means "swamp," an area where rain water gathers to form a shallow lake. Ghadir Khumm is located near the crossroads of trade and pilgrimage caravans coming from Medina, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Nejd on their way to Mecca. The presence of water and a few old trees there served as a resting place for trade caravans for centuries. A mosque, called Masjid al-Ghadir, was later built on the same spot where the great gathering took place to commemorate that momentous event, an event which has unfortunately been forgotten by the vast majority of the Muslims who, by thus forgetting, forgot the most important part of their creed, one without which their faith is not complete at all according to the Prophet's sermon to follow and according to the text of the Holy Quran...

The announcement conveyed by Bilal was transmitted by one person to another till it reached as far as Mecca proper, and people were wondering about what it could be. They had expected the Prophet to linger a little bit longer at Mecca where the pilgrims could meet him and ask him whatever questions they had about this new institution called "ajj" and about other religious matters.

In the morning of the next day, Dhul-ijja 18, 10 A.H./March 19, 632 A.D., the Prophet and his 120,000 companions went to Ghadir Khumm, and so did `Ali (ع) with his 12,000 Yemenite pilgrims who had to change their route to the north instead of to the south where they would be home-bound. The Prophet also issued an order to four of his closest aaba, namely Selman al-Farisi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Miqdad ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi and Ammar ibn Yasir, with whom the reader is already familiar, to clear the area where the old trees stood, to uproot the thorn bushes, collect the rocks and stones, and to clean the place and sprinkle it with water. Then these men took a piece of cloth which they tied between two of those trees, thus providing some shade. The Prophet told those

aaba that a ceremony that would last for three continuous days would be held in that area. Then the same men piled the rocks on top of each other and made a makeshift pulpit over them of camel litters as high as the Prophet's own length. They put another piece of cloth on the pulpit which was installed in the middle of the crowd, giving the Prophet (ص) an overview of the whole gathering. A man was selected to repeat loudly what the Prophet was saying so that those who stood the furthermost would not miss a word.

The athan for the noon prayers was recited, and the congregational (jama`a) prayers were led by the Prophet (ص). After that, the Prophet ascended the pulpit and signalled to Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to stand on his right. Ali (ع) did so, standing one pulpit step below the Prophet (ص). Before saying anything, the Prophet (ص) looked right and left to make sure that people were prepared to listen to every word of his. The sun was so hot that people had to pull some of their outer mantles over their heads and under their feet in order to be able to somehow tolerate the heat. Finally the Prophet (ص) delivered his historic sermon which he intended, as the reader will see, to be not only for the assembled crowd but for all those who were not present at that gathering and for all their offspring, one generation after another, till the Day of Judgment.

Here is the text of the Prophet's sermon. We hope it will bring the reader guidance in the life of this world and happiness and success in the life to come through the intercession of Muammed (ص), the one loved most by Allah, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon him, his progeny, and true companions who obeyed him during his lifetime and after his demise and who did not forget or pretend to forget his following khuba:

Prophet’s Historic Ghadir Sermaon

Here is a humble translation by our Brother Yasin T. al-Jibouri, Editor of this book, of the Prophet’s historic Ghadir Khumm sermon, the English translation of which was published in book form together with the original Arabic text in Dhul-Hijjah 1419/March 1999 in the United States of America by Darul-Salam Center, Inc., P.O. Box 4355, Rockville, Maryland 20849-4355, U.S.A. The original Arabic text of this lengthy sermon was compiled from various sources by Muhammad Baqir al-Ansari, may the Almighty reward him with His Divine Unmatched

Generosity, and published by Ansariyan Publications of Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran.

All Praise is due to Allah Who is Exalted in His Unity, Near in His Uniqueness, Sublime in His Authority, Magnanimous in His Dominance. He knows everything; He subdues all creation through His might and evidence. He is Praised always and forever, Glorified and has no end. He begins and He repeats, and to Him every matter is referred.

Allah is the Creator of everything; He dominates with His power the earth and the heavens. Holy, He is, and Praised, the Lord of the angels and of the spirits. His favors overwhelm whatever He creates, and He is the Mighty over whatever He initiates. He observes all eyes while no eye can observe Him. He is Generous, Clement, Patient. His mercy encompasses everything, and so is His giving. He never rushes His revenge, nor does He hasten the retribution they deserve. He comprehends what the breast conceals and what the conscience hides. No inner thought can be concealed from Him, nor does He confuse one with another. He encompasses everything, dominates everything, and subdues everything. Nothing is like Him. He initiates the creation from nothing; He is everlasting, living, sustaining in the truth; there is no god but He, the Omnipotent, the Wise One.

He is greater than can be conceived by visions, while He conceives all visions, the Eternal, the Knowing. None can describe Him by seeing Him, nor can anyone find out how He is, be it by his intellect or by a spoken word except through what leads to Him, the Sublime, the Mighty that He is.

I testify that He is Allah, the One Who has filled time with His Holiness, the One Whose Light overwhelms eternity, Who effects His will without consulting anyone; there is no partner with Him in His decisions, nor is He assisted in running His affairs. He shaped what He made without following a preexisting model, and He created whatever He created without receiving help from anyone, nor did doing so exhaust Him nor frustrated His designs. He created, and so it was, and He initiated, and it became visible. So He is Allah, the One and Only God, the One Who does whatever He does extremely well. He is the Just One Who never oppresses, the most Holy to Whom all affairs are referred.

I further testify that He is Allah before Whom everything is humbled, to Whose Greatness everything is humiliated, and to Whose Dignity everything submits. He is the King of every domain and the One

Who places planets in their orbits. He controls the movements of the sun and of the moon, each circles till a certain time. He makes the night follow the day and the day follow the night, seeking it incessantly. He splits the spine of every stubborn tyrant and annihilates every mighty devil.

Never has there been any opponent opposing Him nor a peer assisting Him. He is Independent; He never begets nor is He begotten, and none can ever be His equal. He is One God, the Glorified Lord. His will is done; His word is the law. He knows, so He takes account. He causes death and gives life. He makes some poor and others rich. He causes some to smile and others to cry. He brings some nearer to Him while distancing others from Him. He withholds and He gives. The domain belongs to Him and so is all the Praise. In His hand is all goodness, and He can do anything at all.

He lets the night cover the day and the day cover the night; there is no god but He, the Sublime, the oft-Forgiving One. He responds to the supplication; He gives generously; He computes the breath; He is the Lord of the jinns and of mankind, the One Whom nothing confuses, nor is He annoyed by those who cry for His help, nor is He fed-up by those who persist. He safeguards the righteous against sinning, and He enables the winners to win. He is the Master of the Faithful, the Lord of the Worlds Who deserves the appreciation of all those whom He created and is praised no matter what.

I praise Him and always thank Him for the ease He brings me and for the constriction, in hardship and in prosperity, and I believe in Him, in His angels, in His Books and messengers. I listen to His Command and I obey, and I initiate the doing of whatever pleases Him, and I submit to His decree hoping to acquire obedience to Him and fear of His penalty, for He is Allah against Whose designs nobody should feel secure, nor should anyone ever fear His "oppression."

I testify, even against my own soul, that I am His servant, and I bear witness that he is my Lord. I convey what He reveals to me, being cautious lest I should not do it, so a catastrophe from Him would befall upon me, one which none can keep away, no matter how great his design may be and how sincere his friendship. There is no god but He, for He has informed me that if I do not convey what **He has just revealed to me** in honor of Ali (ع) in truth, I will not have conveyed His Message at all, and He, the Praised and the Exalted One, has guaranteed for me to protect me from the (evil) people, and He is Allah, the One Who suffices, the Sublime. He has just revealed to me the following (verse):

In The Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

O Messenger! Convey what has (just) been revealed to you (with regard to `Ali), and if you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His Message at all, and Allah shall protect you from (evil) people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people. (Quran, 5:67)

O people! I have not committed any shortcoming in conveying what Allah Almighty revealed to me, and I am now going to explain to you the reason behind the revelation of this verse: **Three times did Gabriel command me on behalf of the Peace, my Lord, Who is the source of all peace, to thus make a stand in order to inform everyone, black and white, that: Ali ibn Abu alib (ع) is my Brother, Wai, and successor over my nation and the Imam after me, the one whose status to me is like that of Aaron to Moses except there will be no prophet after me, and he is your master next only to Allah and to His Messenger**, and Allah has already revealed to me the same in one of the fixed verses[110] of His Book saying, "Your Master is Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay zakat even as they bow down" (Quran, 5:55), and Ali ibn Abu alib is the one who keeps up prayers, who pays zakat even as he bows down, seeking to please Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty, on each and every occasion.

I asked Gabriel to plead to the Peace to excuse me from having to convey such a message to you, O people, due to my knowledge that **the pious are few**[111] while the hypocrites are **many**, and due to those who will blame me, and due to the trickery of those who ridicule Islam and whom Allah described in His Book as saying with their tongues contrarily to what their hearts conceal, thinking lightly of it, while it is with Allah magnanimous, and due to the abundance of their harm to me, so much so that they called me "ears" and claimed that I am so because of being so much in his (Ali's) company, always welcoming him, loving him and being so much pleased with him till Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime One, revealed in this regard the verse saying: "And there are some of them who harm the (feelings of the) Prophet and say: He is an ear (uthun; i.e. he always listens to Ali). Say: One who listens (to Ali) is good for you; He believes in Allah and testifies to the conviction of the believers and a

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[1101]Fixed verses are those which are never abrogated; the injunction(s) they contain remain valid forever.

[111]

mercy for those of you who believe; and those who (thus) harm the Messenger of Allah shall have a painful punishment" (Quran, 9:61). Had I wished to name those who have called me so, I would have called them by their names, and I would have pointed them out. I would have singled them out and called them by what they really are, but I, by Allah, am fully aware of their affairs. Yet despite all of that, Allah insisted that I should convey what He has just revealed to me in honor of Ali.

Then the Prophet (ص) recited the following verse:

O Messenger! Convey what has (just) been revealed to you (with regard to `Ali), and if you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His Message at all, and Allah shall protect you from (evil) people. (Quran, 5:67)

O people! Comprehend (the implications of) what I have just said, and again do comprehend it, and be (further) informed that Allah has installed him (Ali) as your Master and Imam, obligating the Muhajirn and the Anar and those who follow them in goodness to obey him, and so must everyone who lives in the desert or in the city, who is a non-Arab or an Arab, who is a free man or a slave, who is young or old, white or black, **and so should everyone who believes in His Unity**. His decree shall be carried out. His (Ali's) word is binding; his command is obligating; cursed is whoever opposes him, blessed with mercy is whoever follows him and believes in him, for Allah has already forgiven him and forgiven whoever listens to him and obeys him.

O people! This is the last stand I make in such a situation; so, listen and obey, and submit to the Command of Allah, your Lord, for Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime One, is your Master and Lord, then next to Him is His Messenger and Prophet who is now addressing you, then after me Ali (ع) is your Master and Imam according to the Command of Allah, your Lord, **then the Imams from among my progeny, his offspring, till the Day you meet Allah and His Messenger**.

Nothing is permissible except what is deemed so by Allah, His Messenger, and they (the Imams), and nothing is prohibitive except what is deemed so by Allah and His Messenger and they (the Imams). Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime One, has made me acquainted with what is permissible and what is prohibitive, and I have conveyed to you what my

Lord has taught me of His Book, of what it decrees as permissible or as prohibitive.

O people! Prefer him (Ali) over all others! There is no knowledge except that Allah has divulged it to me, and all the knowledge I have learned I have divulged to Imam al-Muttaqin (leader of the righteous), and there is no knowledge (that I know) except that I divulged it to Ali, and he is al-Imam al-Mubin (the evident Imam) whom Allah mentions in Srat Ya-Sin: "... and everything We have computed is in (the knowledge of) an evident Imam" (Quran, 36:12).

O people! Do not abandon him, nor should you flee away from him, nor should you be too arrogant to accept his authority, for he is the one who guides to righteousness and who acts according to it. He defeats falsehood and prohibits others from acting according to it, accepting no blame from anyone while seeking to please Allah. He is the first to believe in Allah and in His Messenger; none preceded him as such. And he is the one who offered his life as a sacrifice for the Messenger of Allah and who was in the company of the Messenger of Allah while no other man was. He is the first of all people to offer prayers and the first to worship Allah with me. I ordered him, on behalf of Allah, to sleep in my bed, and he did, offering his life as a sacrifice for my sake.

O people! Prefer him (over all others), for Allah has preferred him, and accept him, for Allah has appointed him (as your leader).

O people! He is an Imam appointed by Allah, and Allah shall never accept the repentance of anyone who denies his authority, nor shall He forgive him; this is a must decree from Allah never to do so to anyone who opposes him, and that He shall torment him with a most painful torment for all time to come, for eternity; so, beware lest you should oppose him and thus enter the fire the fuel of which is the people and the stones prepared for the unbelievers.

O people! By Allah! All past prophets and messengers conveyed the glad tiding of my advent, and I, by Allah, am the seal of the prophets and of the messengers and the argument against all beings in the heavens and on earth. Anyone who doubts this commits apostasy similar to that of the early jahiliyya, and anyone who doubts anything of what I have just said doubts **everything** which has been revealed to me, and anyone who doubts any of the Imams doubts all of them, and anyone who doubts us shall be lodged in the fire.

O people! Allah, the most Exalted and the Almighty, has bestowed this virtue upon me out of His kindness towards Ali (ع) and as a boon to Ali (ع), and there is no god but He; to Him all praise belongs in all times, for eternity, and in all circumstances.

O people! Prefer Ali (ع) (over all others), for he is the very best of all people after me, be they males or females, so long as Allah sends down His sustenance, so long as there are beings. Cursed and again cursed, condemned and again condemned, is anyone who does not accept this statement of mine and who does not agree to it. Gabriel himself has informed me of the same on behalf of Allah Almighty Who he said (in Gabriel's words): "Anyone who antagonizes Ali (ع) and refuses to accept his wilayat shall incur My curse upon him and My wrath." "... and let every soul consider what it has sent forth for the morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah" (Quran, 59:18), "And do not make your oaths a means of deceit between you lest a foot should slip after its stability" (Quran, 16:94), "Allah is fully aware of all what you do" (Quran, 58:13).

O people! He (Ali) is janb-Allah mentioned in the Book of Allah, the Sublime One: The Almighty, forewarning his (Ali's) adversaries, says, "Lest a soul should say: O woe unto me for what I fell short of my duty to Allah, and most surely I was of those who laughed to scorn" (Quran, 39:56).

O people! Study the Quran and comprehend its verses, look into its fixed verses and do not follow what is similar thereof, for by Allah, none shall explain to you what it forbids you from doing, nor clarify its exegesis, other than the one whose hand I am taking and whom I am lifting to me, the one whose arm I am taking and whom I am lifting, so that I may enable you to understand that: Whoever among you takes me as his master, this Ali (ع) is his master, and he is `Ali ibn Abu alib (ع), my Brother and wai, **and his appointment as your wali is from Allah**, the Sublime, the Exalted One, a commandment which He revealed to me.

O people! Ali (ع) and the good ones from among my offspring from his loins are the Lesser Weight, while the Quran is the Greater One: each one of them informs you of and agrees with the other. They shall never part till they meet me at the Pool (of Kawthar). They are the Trustees of Allah over His creation, the rulers on His earth.

Indeed now I have performed my duty and conveyed the Message. Indeed you have heard what I have said and explained. Indeed Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, has said, and so have I on behalf of Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, that there is no Amirul-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) save this Brother of mine; no authority over a believer is permissible after me except to him.

Then the Prophet patted Ali's arm, lifting him up. Since the time when the Messenger of Allah ascended the pulpit, Amirul-Mu'minin was one pulpit step below where the Messenger of Allah had seated himself on his pulpit, while Ali (ع) was on his (Prophet's) right side, one pulpit step lower, now they both appeared to the gathering to be on the same level; the Prophet lifted him up. The Prophet then raised his hands to the heavens in supplication while Ali's leg was touching the knee of the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet continued his sermon thus:

O people! This is Ali, my Brother, Wai, the one who comprehends my knowledge, and my successor over my nation, over everyone who believes in me. He is the one entrusted with explaining the Book of Allah, the most Exalted One, the Sublime, and the one who invites people to His path. He is the one who does whatever pleases Him, fighting His enemies, befriending His friends who obey Him, prohibiting disobedience to Him. **He is the successor of the Messenger of Allah and Amirul-Mu'minin**, the man assigned by Allah to guide others, killer of the renegades and of those who believe in equals to Allah, those who violate the Commandments of Allah. Allah says, "My Word shall not be changed, nor am I in the least unjust to the servants" (Quran, 50:29), and by Your Command, O Lord, do I (submit and) say, O Allah! Befriend whoever befriends him (Ali) and be the enemy of whoever antagonizes him; support whoever supports him and abandon whoever abandons him; curse whoever disavows him, and **let Your Wrath descend on whoever usurps his right**.

O Lord! You revealed a verse in honor of Ali, Your wali, in its explanation and to effect Your own appointment of him this very day did You say, "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (Quran, 5:3); "And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers" (Quran, 3:85).

Lord! I implore You to testify that I have conveyed (Your Message).

O people! Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, has perfected your religion through his (Ali's) Imamate; so, whoever rejects him as his Imam or rejects those of my offspring from his loins who assume the same status (as Imams) till the Day of Judgment when they shall all be displayed before Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, these are the ones whose (good) deeds shall be nil and void in the life of this world and in the hereafter, and in the fire shall they be lodged forever, "... their torture shall not be decreased, nor shall they be given a respite" (Quran, 2:162).

O people! Here is Ali, the one who has supported me more than anyone else among you, the one who most deserves my gratitude, the one who is closest of all of you to me and the one who is the very dearest to me. Both Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, and I are pleased with him, and no verse of the Holy Quran expressing Allah's Pleasure except that he is implied therein, nor has any verse of praise been revealed in the Quran except that he is implied therein, nor has the Lord testified to Paradise in the (Quranic) Chapter starting with "Has there not come over man a long period of time when he was nothing (not even) mentioned?" (Quran, 76:1) nor was this Chapter revealed except in his praise.

O people! He is the one who supports the religion of Allah, who argues on behalf of the Messenger of Allah. He is the pious, the pure, the guide, the one rightly guided. Your Prophet is the best of all prophets, and your wai is the best of all wais, and his offspring are the best of wais.

O people! Each prophet's progeny is from his own loins whereas mine is from the loins of Amirul-Mu’minin Ali.

O people! Iblis caused Adam to be dismissed from the garden through envy; so, do not envy him lest your deeds should be voided and lest your feet should slip away, for Adam was sent down to earth after having committed only one sin, and he was among the elite of Allah's creation. How, then, will be your case, and you being who you are, and among you are enemies of Allah?

Indeed, none hates Ali (ع) except a wretch, and none accepts Ali's wilayat except a pious person. None believes in him except a sincere mu'min, and in honor of Ali (ع) was the Chapter of Ar (Ch. 103) revealed, I swear to it by Allah: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I swear by time that most surely man is in loss" (Quran, 103:1-2) except Ali (ع) who believed and was pleased with the truth and with perseverance.

O people! I have sought Allah to be my Witness and have conveyed my Message to you, and the Messenger is obligated only to clearly convey (his Message).

O people! " Fear Allah as He ought to be feared, and do not die except as Muslims" (Quran, 3:102).

O people! "... Believe in what We have revealed, verifying what you have, before We alter faces then turn them on their backs or curse them as We cursed the violators of the Sabbath" (Quran, 4:47). By Allah! He did not imply anyone in this verse except a certain band of my aaba whom I know by name and by lineage, and I have been ordered (by my Lord) to pardon them; so, let each person deal with Ali (ع) according to what he finds in his heart of love or of hatred.

O people! The noor from Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, flows through me then through Ali ibn Abu alib (ع), then in the progeny that descends from him till al-Qa'im al-Mehdi (ع), who shall effect the justice of Allah, and who will take back any right belonging to us because Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, made us ujjat over those who take us lightly, the stubborn ones, those who act contrarily to our word, who are treacherous, who are sinners, who are oppressors, **who are usurpers**, from the entire world.

O people! I warn you that I am the Messenger of Allah; messengers before me have already passed away; so, should I die or should I be killed, are you going to turn upon your heels? And whoever turns upon his heels shall not harm Allah in the least, and Allah shall reward those who are grateful, those who persevere. Ali (ع) is surely the one described with perseverance and gratitude, then after him are my offspring from his loins.

O people! Do not think that you are doing me a favour by your accepting Islam. Nay! Do not think that you are doing Allah such a favour lest He should void your deeds, lest His wrath should descend upon you, lest He should try you with a flame of fire and brass; surely your Lord is ever-watchful.

O people! There shall be Imams after me who shall invite people to the fire, and they shall not be helped on the Day of Judgment.

O people! Allah and I are both clear of them.

O people! They and their supporters and followers shall be in the lowest rung of the fire; miserable, indeed, is the resort of the arrogant ones. Indeed, these are the folks of the saifa; so, let each one of you look into his saifa!

This reference to the saifa has been overlooked by most people with the exception of a small band, and we will, Insha-Allah, shed a light on this saifa later on. The Prophet continued his historic sermon thus:

O people! I am calling for it to be **an Imamate and a succession confined to my offspring till the Day of Judgment**, and I have conveyed only what I have been commanded (by my Lord) to convey to drive the argument home against everyone present or absent and on everyone who has witnessed or who has not, who is already born or he is yet to be born; therefore, let those present here convey it to those who are absent, and let the father convey it to his son, and so on till the Day of Judgment.

And **they** shall make the Imamate after me a property, **a usurpation**; may Allah curse the usurpers who usurp[112], and it is then that you, O jinns and mankind, will get the full attention of the One Who shall cause a flame of fire and brass to be hurled upon you, and you shall not achieve any victory!

O people! Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, is not to let you be whatever you want to be except so that He may distinguish the bad ones from among you from the good, and Allah is not to make you acquainted with the unknown.

O people! There shall be no town that falsifies except that Allah shall annihilate it on account of its falsehood before the Day of Judgment, and He shall give al-Imam al-Mehdi (ع) authority over it, and surely Allah's promise is true.

O people! Most of the early generations before you have strayed, and by Allah, He surely annihilated the early generations, and He shall annihilate the later ones. Allah Almighty has said, "Did We not destroy the former generations? Then did We follow them up with later ones. Even thus shall We deal with the guilty. Woe on that Day to the rejecters!" (Quran, 77:16-19).

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112 [1]This is surely a Prophetic prediction that Ali's right to the caliphate would be usurped. The usurpers were the very first to swear the oath of allegiance to *Amirul-Mu'minin* Ali (ع) and the very first to violate it.

O people! Allah has ordered me to do and not to do, and I have ordered Ali (ع) to do and not to do, so he learned what should be done and what should not; therefore, you should listen to his orders so that you may be safe, and you should obey him so that you may be rightly guided. Do not do what he forbids you from doing so that you may acquire wisdom. Agree with him, and do not let your paths be different from his.

O people! I am al-ira al-Mustaqeem (the Straight Path) of Allah whom He commanded you to follow, and it is after me `Ali (ع) then my offspring from his loins, the Imams of Guidance: they guide to the truth and act accordingly.

Then the Prophet (ص) recited the entire text of Surat al-Fatia and commented by saying:

It is in my honor that this (Sura) was revealed, including them (the Imams) specifically; they are the friends of Allah for whom there shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve; truly the Party of Allah are the winners.

Indeed, it is their enemies who are the impudent ones, the deviators, the brethren of Satan; they inspire each other with embellished speech out of their haughtiness.

Indeed, their (Imams') friends are the ones whom Allah, the Exalted One, the Great, mentions in His Book saying, "You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and in the latter Day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and to His Prophet, even though they may be their own fathers or sons or brothers or kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed conviction" (Quran, 58:22). Indeed, their (Imam's) friends are the mu'mins (believers) whom Allah, the Exalted One, the Sublime, describes as: "Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are the ones who shall have the security, and they are the rightly guided" (Quran, 6:82).

Indeed, their friends are those who believed and never doubted. Indeed, their friends are the ones who shall enter Paradise in peace and security; the angels shall receive them with welcome saying, "Peace be upon you! Enter it and reside in it forever!"

Indeed, their friends shall be rewarded with Paradise where they shall be sustained without having to account for anything.

Indeed, their enemies are the ones who shall be hurled into the fire.

Indeed, their enemies are the ones who shall hear the exhalation of hell as it increases in intensity, and they shall see it sigh.

Indeed, their enemies are the ones thus described by Allah: "Whenever a nation enters, it shall curse its sister..." (Quran, 7:38).

Indeed, their enemies are the ones whom Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, describes thus: "Whenever a group is cast into it, its keepers shall ask them: Did any warner not come to you? They shall say: Yea! Indeed, there came to us a warner but we rejected (him) and said: Allah has not revealed anything; you are only in a great error. And they shall say: Had we but listened or pondered, we would not have been among the inmates of the burning fire. So they shall acknowledge their sins, but far will be (forgiveness) from the inmates of the burning fire" (Quran, 67:8-11).

Indeed, their friends are the ones who fear their Lord in the unseen; forgiveness shall be theirs and a great reward.

O people! What a difference it is between the fire and the great reward!

O people! Our enemy is the one whom Allah censures and curses, whereas our friend is everyone praised and loved by Allah.

O people! I am the Warner (nathir) and Ali (ع) is the one who brings glad tidings (bashir).

O people! I am the one who warns (Mundhir) while Ali (ع) is the guide (hadi).

O people! I am a Prophet (nabi) and Ali (ع) is the successor (wai).

O people! I am a Messenger (rasul) and Ali (ع) is the Imam and the Wai after me, **and so are the Imams after him from among his offspring**. Indeed, I am their father, and they shall descend from his loins.

Indeed, the seal of the Imams from among us is al-Qa'im al-Mehdi. He, indeed, is the one who shall come out so that the creed may prevail. He, indeed, is the one who shall seek revenge against the oppressor. He, indeed, is the one who conquers the forts and demolishes them. He, indeed, is the one who subdues every tribe from among the people of polytheism and the one to guide it.

He is the one who shall seek redress for all friends of Allah. He is the one who supports the religion of Allah. He ever derives (his knowledge) from a very deep ocean. He shall identify each man of distinction by his distinction and every man of ignorance by his ignorance. He shall be the choicest of Allah's beings and the chosen one. He is the heir of all (branches of) knowledge, the one who encompasses every perception. He conveys on behalf of his Lord, the Exalted and the Sublime, who points out His miracles. He is the wise, the one endowed with wisdom, the one upon whom (Divine) authority is vested.

Glad tidings of him have been conveyed by past generations, yet he is the one who shall remain as a ujja, and there shall be no ujja after him nor **any** right except with him, nor any noor except with him.

None, indeed, shall subdue him, nor shall he ever be vanquished. He is the friend of Allah on His earth, the judge over His creatures, the custodian of what is evident and what is hidden of His.

O people! I have explained (everything) for you and enabled you to comprehend it, and this Ali (ع) shall after me explain everything to you.

At the conclusion of my khuba, I shall call upon you to shake hands with me to swear your allegiance to him and to recognize his authority, then to shake hands with him after you have shaken hands with me.

I had, indeed, sworn allegiance to Allah, and Ali (ع) had sworn allegiance to me, and I on behalf of Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, I require you to swear the oath of allegiance to him: "Surely those who swear (the oath of) allegiance to you do but swear allegiance to Allah; the hand of Allah is above their hands; therefore, whoever reneges (from his oath), he reneges only to the injury of his own soul, and whoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward" (Quran, 48:10).

O people! The pilgrimage (ajj) and the umra are among Allah's rituals; "So whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or pays a visit (to it), there is no blame on him if he goes round them [afa and Marwa] both" (Quran, 2:158).

O people! Perform your pilgrimage to the House, for no members of a family went there except that they became wealthy, and receive glad tidings! None failed to do so except that their lineage was cut-off and were impoverished.

O people! No believer stands at the standing place [at Arafa] except that Allah forgives his past sins till then; so, once his pilgrimage is over, he resumes his deeds.

O people! Pilgrims are assisted, and their expenses shall be replenished, and Allah never suffers the rewards of the doers of good to be lost.

O people! Perform your pilgrimage to the House by perfecting your religion and by delving into fiqh, and do not leave the sacred places except after having repented and abandoned (the doing of anything prohibited).

O people! Uphold prayers and pay the zakat as Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, commanded you; so, if time lapses and you were short of doing so or you forgot, `Ali (ع) is your wali and he will explain for you. He is the one whom Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, appointed for you after me as the custodian of His creation. He is from me and I am from him, and he and those who will succeed him from my progeny shall inform you of anything you ask them about, and they shall clarify whatever you do not know.

alal and aram things are more than I can count for you now or explain, for a commandment to enjoin what is permissible and a prohibition from what is not permissible are both on the same level, so I was ordered (by my Lord) to take your oath of allegiance and to make a covenant with you to accept what I brought you from Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, with regards to `Ali (ع) Amirul-Mu'minin and to the wais after him who are from me and from him, a standing Imamate whose seal is al-Mehdi till the Day he meets Allah Who decrees and Who judges.

O people! I never refrained from informing you of everything permissible or prohibitive; so, do remember this and safeguard it and advise each other to do likewise; do not alter it; do not substitute it with something else.

I am now repeating what I have already said: Uphold the prayers and pay the zakat and enjoin righteousness and forbid abomination.

The peak of enjoining righteousness is to resort to my speech and to convey it to whoever did not attend it and to order him on my behalf to accept it and to (likewise) order him not to violate it, for it is an order from Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, and there is no knowledge of enjoining righteousness nor prohibiting abomination except that it is with a ma`oom Imam.

O people! The Quran informs you that the Imams after him are his (Ali's) descendants, and I have already informed you that they are from me and from him, for Allah says in His Book, "And he made it a word to continue in his posterity so that they may return" (Quran, 43:28) while I have said: "You shall not stray as long as you uphold both of them (simultaneously)."

O people! (Uphold) piety, (uphold) piety, and be forewarned of the Hour as Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, has said, "O people! Guard (yourselves) against (punishment from) your Lord; surely the violence of the Hour is a grievous thing" (Quran, 22:1).

Remember death, resurrection, the judgment, the scales, and the account before the Lord of the Worlds, and (remember) the rewards and the penalty. So whoever does a good deed shall be rewarded for it, and whoever commits a sin shall have no place in the Gardens.

O people! You are more numerous than (it is practical) to shake hands with me all at the same time, and Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, commanded me to require you to confirm what authority I have vested upon `Ali (ع) Amirul-Mu'minin and to whoever succeeds him of the Imams from me and from him, since I have just informed you that my offspring are from his loins.

You, therefore, should say in one voice: "We hear, and we obey; we accept and we are bound by what you have conveyed to us from our

Lord and yours with regard to our Imam Ali (ع), Amirul-Mu'minin, and to the Imams, your sons from his loins. We swear the oath of allegiance to you in this regard with our hearts, with our souls, with our tongues, with our hands. According to it shall we live, and according to it shall we die, and according to it shall we be resurrected. We shall not alter anything or substitute anything with another, nor shall we doubt nor deny nor suspect, nor shall we violate our covenant nor abrogate the pledge. You admonished us on behalf of Allah with regard to Ali (ع), Amirul-Mu'minin, and to the Imams whom you mentioned to be from your offspring from among his descendants after him: al-assan and al-ussain (ع), and to whoever is appointed (as such) by Allah after them. The covenant and the pledge are taken from us, from our hearts, from our souls, from our tongues, from our conscience, from our hands. Whoever does so by his handshake, it shall be so, or otherwise testified to it by his tongue, and we do not seek any substitute for it, nor shall Allah see our souls deviating therefrom. We shall convey the same on your behalf to anyone near and far of our offspring and families, and we implore Allah to testify to it, and surely Allah suffices as the Witness and you, too, shall testify for us."

O people! What are you going to say?! Allah knows every sound and the innermost of every soul; "Whoever chooses the right guidance, it is for his own soul that he is rightly guided, and whoever strays, it is only to its detriment that he goes astray" (Quran, 17:15).

O people! Swear the oath of allegiance to Allah, and swear it to me, and swear it to Ali (ع), Amirul-Mu'minin, and to al-assan and al-ussain (ع), and to the Imams from their offspring in the life of this world and in the hereafter, a word that shall always remain so. Allah shall annihilate anyone guilty of treachery and be merciful upon everyone who remains true to his word: "Whoever reneges (from his oath), he reneges only to the harm of his own soul, and whoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward" (Quran, 48:10).

O people! Repeat what I have just told you to, and greet Ali (ع) with the title of authority of "Amirul-Mu'minin" and say: "We hear, and we obey, O Lord! Your forgiveness (do we seek), and to You is the eventual course" (Quran, 2:285), and you should say: "All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been for Allah Who guided us" (Quran, 7:43).

O people! The merits of `Ali ibn Abu alib (ع) with Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, the merits which are revealed in the Quran, are more numerous than I can recount in one speech; so, whoever informs you of them and defines them for you, you should believe him.

O people! Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and Ali (ع) and the Imāms to whom I have already referred shall attain a great victory.

O people! Those foremost from among you who swear allegiance to him and who pledge to obey him and who greet him with the greeting of being the Commander of the Faithful are the ones who shall win the Gardens of Felicity.

O people! Say what brings you the Pleasure of Allah, for if you and all the people of the earth disbelieve, it will not harm Allah in the least.

O Lord! Forgive the believers through what I have conveyed, and let Your Wrath descend upon those who renege, the apostates, and all Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

The Holy Prophet (ص) was returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage and had reached the place Khumm, (which in the words of the famous historian and geographer Ibn Khallikan is a valley lying between Mecca and Medina and in the neighborhood of Juhfa). It contains a pond, ghadir, near which the Prophet (ص) pronounced his invocation. This took place on the 18th of Dhul-Hijja and the 18th of this month of the year 10 A.H. which coincided with March 18, 632 A.D., and this date has been ever since the anniversary of the Feast of Ghadir (Eidul-Ghadir).

There, the Holy Prophet (ص) suddenly stopped his camel and said that just then a message from Allah was revealed to him which must immediately be conveyed to the Muslims. He dispatched messengers towards those who had gone ahead and those who were following him leisurely to come back or to hurry up and join him at once. When all of them were gathered he performed the noon-prayers in that blazing hot summer sun. A pulpit was erected for him and from this eminence he preached a sermon which is rightly considered as a masterpiece of Arabic literature and a brief survey of what the Holy Prophet (ص) had taught and

achieved for the Muslims. Then he said that he had just then received the revelation which said, “O Messenger! Proclaim the whole of what which hath been sent down to you from Your Master, for it you dost it not, it will be as if you hast not all performed the duty of His Prophethood. And Allah will protect you (thy mission) from evil men, verily Allah guides not the unbelievers,” and he was standing there to convey that message to the Muslims and to perform the duty he was ordered to perform. Continuing the sermon, he said, “O people! Shortly I shall be called (to Heaven), and if I go back, I shall have to give an account as to how I have conveyed His Message to you and you (in your turn) will also be asked as to how you have accepted and carried out my teachings. Now tell me what you will say.”All the gathering as one man declared, “O Messenger of Allah! We testify and declare that you have conveyed the message of Allah in full details, you have striven your utmost to guide us to the right path and taught us to follow it. You were most kind to us and you never wished for us but our good, may Allah repay you for all that.”Thereupon, he asked the gathering, “Do you not testify that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, that there is Heaven and Hell? Do testify that death will overtake everyone of you, that you will be brought back from your graves, that the day of resurrection will surely dawn and human beings will be resurrected from their graves to account for their deeds?”The gathering declared, “We believe and testify to all of this. Hearing this declaration he said, “I am leaving among you two of the most important things worthy of obedience, the Holy Quran and my trat, progeny. Take care how you treat them; they will not separate from each other till they reach me on the Fountain of Kawthar.” Then said he, “The Almighty Allah is my Master (mawla) and I am the master of all Muslims and have more right and power on their lives than they themselves; do you believe in this assertion of mine?” In one voice, they all replied, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah!” Thrice he asked the same question and thrice he received the same reply. On this solemn affirmation he said, “Hear and remember that to whomever I am a Master (mawla), Ali (ع) is his master (mawla). He is to me what Aaron was to Moses. O Allah Almighty! Be the friend of his friends and the foe of his foes! Lord! Help whoever helps him and frustrate those who betray him.” Having said all of this, he raised Imam Ali (ع) so that the gathering could have a look at the man who would be master of those who believe in the Holy Prophet (ص) as their master. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (ص) received the following congratulatory Quranic revelation: “This day have I perfected your religion for you, filled the measure of my blessings upon you, and I am pleased with your submitting to His Will alone (Islam) as your religion.”

Having performed this ceremony and received the above revelation, the Holy Prophet (ص) came down from the pulpit, prostrated before Allah in prayers and ordered a tent to be put up. In this tent, Imam Ali (ع) was took his seat and people were ordered to pay homage to him and to address him as Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) (Commander of the Faithful). The first person to congratulate and to swear the oath of allegiance was `Umar ibn al-Khattab who said, "I congratulate you, O Ali! Today, you have become my mawla (Master) and Master of every Muslim man and woman."

For more details, refer to the following references:

1. The Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal (Vol. 5, p. 281)
2. Imam al-Ghazali in Siyar al-lamin

In addition to these two references, allama al-Amini wrote 11 volumes on this incident, choosing Al-Ghadir as the title of his encyclopedia.

The remarks of Imam al-Ghazali about this event and the inferences which he has drawn are instructive readings. If I have room in this book at my disposal, I shall add them as a separate index; otherwise, Siyar al-lamin may suffice as a reference.

Here is a list of some of the famous 153 authors and books which contain details of the above historical event:

1. Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (125 A.H.)
2. Muhammad ibn Ishaq (152 A.H.)
3. Ibn Rahooya (238 A.H.)
4. Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 5, p. 281 (243 A.H.)
5. Jarir al-Tabari (310 A.H.)
6. Al-Tirmidhi (320 A.H.)
7. Imam Hakim (Mustadrak) (400 A.H.)
8. Imam al-Ghazali (Siyar al-lamin) (505 A.H.)
9. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi (654 A.H.)
10. Ibn Subbaq al-Malekee (855 A.H.)
11. Sayyuti (1011 A.H.)
12. Shaikh Abdul-Haqq muhaddith Dahlawi (1052 A.H.)
13. Shah Waliyyullah muhaddith Dahlawi (1176 A.H.)
14. Allama Muhammad Mu`in (1280 A.H.)

A Brief Narrative of Imam Ali's Life from the Hijra to the Death of the Holy Prophet (ص)

1 A.H. To 40 A.H.

When the Holy Prophet (ص) left his house at Mecca in the night and Ali (ع) was found in his bed, the tribesmen of Quraish at first thought of killing him, but when they found him ready to defend himself they gave up idea and dispersed in search of the Holy Prophet (ص).

Ali (ع), as per orders of the Holy Prophet (ص), stayed three days at Mecca and handed back to their owners all the articles which were entrusted to the Holy Prophet (ص) for custody. Most of their owners were his enemies. He left the city in broad daylight.

He was entrusted by the Holy Prophet (ص) for the safe transport of the Holy Prophet's daughter, Fatima (ع), the daughter of Hamzah, another Fatima, his own mother, a third Fatima and his aunt, the daughter of Abdul-Muttalib, a fourth Fatima (ع). The tribesmen of Quraish wanted to prevent the departure of these four ladies. Eight prominent people came out to fight. Ali (ع) fought single handed with them. He killed Junah with a stroke of his sword and scattered the rest and continued the journey. On account of scarcity of mounts he had to travel on foot and thus he reached Medina with bleeding feet. Awaiting the arrival of Imam Ali (ع) the Holy Prophet (ص) was staying at Quba', two miles away from Medina, when he reached Quba', on the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal (probably the end of June) the Holy Prophet (ص) embraced him, dressed his bleeding feet and entered Medina along with him.

Before his migration to Medina, the Holy Prophet (ص) had created a bond of brotherhood between the immigrant Muslims and their Medina supporters. He had fraternized Abu Bakr to the Imam (ع) Umar, Othman to Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf, the Imam (ع) Hamza to Zaid ibn Haresa and Talhah to al-Zubair. On that occasion he had fraternized Imam Ali (ع) to himself, saying, "O Ali! You are my Brother in this world as well as in the next (Tarikh al-Khamis Vol. I p. 398).

1A.H

During the five months following his arrival at Medina, as indicated above, the Prophet (ص) created a fraternity between the Muhajirun (the immigrants) with the Ansars (the supporting citizens of Medina). On that occasion, he again called Ali (ع) and said, "O Ali (ع) you are my brother in this world and hereafter. The historian ibn Hisham says, "The Holy Prophet (ص) caught the hand of Imam Ali (ع) and said, "he alone is my brother. Thus the Messenger of Allah, who was actually the leader of all the prophets as well as of all the pious men of the world and who had no parallel among human beings by fraternizing with Imam Ali (ع), showed that Ali (ع) also had no parallel among mankind except the Holy Prophet (ص). (Seerath al ibn Hisham Vol. 2, Abul-Fida' Vol. I p. 127, Mustadrak of Imam Hakim Vol. 2I and Fath al-Bari, commentary of Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 7, p. 211).

2 A.H.

During the 2nd year of Hijra Imam Ali's marriage took place with the Holy Prophet's daughter Fatima (ع). The Holy Prophet (ص) was receiving many offers for his daughter from very rich people of Medina, from some of the Muhajirun and from chiefs of mighty clans of Arabia. He had refused even to consider these offers and sometime felt annoyed at them. At the end he closed the door by saying that he was awaiting the orders of Allah. The book Usd al-Ghaba fi Tamyeez al-Sahaba, gives a detailed account of these offers and the way of refusal by the Holy Prophet (ص). Some of the Ansars suggested to Imam Ali (ع) to place a proposal for himself before the Holy Prophet (ص). Imam Ali (ع) went before him feeling shy and modest. This was the first time in his life that he talked reservedly to a man who was like a father unto him and to whom he was like a dear son. When the Holy Prophet (ص) heard the proposal he was so pleased that he smiled and said (it is a welcome and happy proposal) Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. I p. 407, Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 8, pp. 11, 12 and Usd al-Ghaba).

The Holy Prophet (ص) took the consent of Fatima (ع) for this proposal. The marriage ceremony was very simple and without pomp and ostentation. There was a sermon from the Holy Prophet (ص) in which he praised Allah mentioning some of His attributes and citing verses of the Holy Quran and concluding with the remarks that he was ordered by

Allah to give Fatima (ع) into marriage with Imam Ali (ع). This was followed by a khutba from Imam Ali (ع), praising Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص) and desiring the gathering to witness his marriage with Fatima (ع), the daughter of Holy Prophet (ص). After this happy ceremony somebody reminded the Holy Prophet (ص) of his late companion in life the mother of Fatima (ع), Khadija and he said, "Khadija! Where is Khadija?! Who can be like Khadija?! She testified for me when the world was falsely accusing me as a liar. She relieved me of much of my weight, she was my partner in my work and she helped me when others were creating obstruction in my mission."

After reaching Medina, the Holy Prophet (ص) stayed in the house of Kulthum ibn Hadam for seven months and Imam Ali (ع) was staying with him. When the Holy Prophet (ص) finished the construction of mosque he built houses for his wives around it and in the center of them he built a house for Imam Ali (ع) (Bukhari's Sira, Ch. 14 p. 387). Following his example, many of his companions except Abu Bakr built their houses around the mosque. Abu Bakr was staying in the locality of Banu Abd Awf where the marriages of both of his daughters took place and later on he shifted to Sukh (Bukhari, Vol. 1). The doors of all the houses built around the mosque opened into the mosque. One day, the Holy Prophet (ص) ordered that except the doors of his houses and that of Ali (ع) all the other doors should be closed. Some of the companions requested him to allow them to keep a small window open. He replied, "No, not a pin hole, Allah so willed it" (refer to: Imam Ahmed's Musnad, the Mustadrak of Imam Hakim, the Khasa'is of al-Nisa'i).

In the year **2 A.H**. the Battle of Badr took place.

3 A.H.

In the year 3 A.H. the first child to Imam Ali (ع) and Fatima (ع) was born and he was named Hassan (ع) by the Holy Prophet (ص).

In the same year (3 A.H.), the Battle of Uhud took place (Refer to Section 15, p. 22) which was followed by the dispatch of an expeditionary force to Hamra'ul-Asad under Imam Ali (ع).

4 A.H.

In the year 4 A.H. Imam Ali (ع) and Fatima (ع) had the second child Hussain (Imam Hussain [ع]) who was also named by the Holy Prophet (ص). In the same year a battle took place with Banu Nazir and Imam Ali (ع) brought it to a successful end and Banu Nazir were forced to vacate their fortress.

5 A.H.

In the year 5 A.H. three battles took place, the Battle with Banu Mostaliq, the Battle of Khandaq (moat) and the Battle with Banu Anzah. In all of them, Ali (ع) was the Commander of the army. The most important of them was the Battle of Khundaq (which I have narrated in Section 15 p. 23).

6 A.H.

In the year 6 A.H. an expedition to Fadak was sent under the command of Imam Ali (ع) and without a battle or skirmish he brought the whole province under control of the Holy Prophet (ص).

In Dhul-Qi`da of this year, the Holy Prophet (ص), along with fourteen hundred Muslims left for Mecca with the intention of hajj (pilgrimage). He had no desire to fight anybody and had left all the armaments at Medina. When the tribesmen of Quraish came to know about this intending pilgrimage they refused to allow the Holy Prophet (ص) to enter Mecca. Khalid ibn al-Walid came out with a force of two hundred well-equipped cavalry men to obstruct the Holy Prophet (ص) and if necessary to fight over the issue. At an oasis called Hudaybiya the opponents faced each other. A chieftain named `Urwa from Quraish came out to discuss the situation with the Holy Prophet (ص) and instead of a battle, a treaty was arranged and it was written by Imam Ali (ع). The last clause of the treaty was that the present intention of the pilgrimage would be given up until the following year although the Holy Prophet (ص) and Muslims could come for Umra.

7 A.H.

In the year 7 A.H. two battles took place, the Khayber and the Wadi al-Qura. The more important of them was Khayber which I have accounted in section 15 p. 25.

In the same year the Holy Prophet (ص) along with Muslims went to perform the umra, it was very peaceful mission. The Holy Prophet (ص) and many of the Muslims had their wives and children with them. The umra was performed without incident.

8 A.H.

In Islamic History, the year 8 A.H. held some important events in its unfolding.

The first of them was the Liberation of Mecca. The terms of the treaty of Hudaybiya were dishonored by the tribesmen of Quraish. Within two years of the treaty, they killed twenty persons from Banu Khuza'a's clan without any justifiable reason. Representatives of the clan came to the Holy Prophet (ص), asking for his promised support. He was annoyed at this flagrant dishonoring of the treaty and said, "I am not helped if I do not help them.

The arrangement for the invasion of Mecca was being carried on by the Muslims. In the meanwhile, Hatib, a companion of the Holy Prophet (ص) who was with him in the battle of Badr, wrote a letter to his family, informing them of the intention of Muslims. This espionage, under the orders of the Holy Prophet (ص) was detected by Imam Ali (ع) and he brought this letter to the Holy Prophet (ص). It was being sent through an Abyssinian slave girl. Hatib confessed his crime and was mercifully pardoned by the Holy Prophet (ص) (Bukhari).

When all the arrangements were ready, the army of invasion, numbering ten thousand, marched towards Mecca. The command of the army this time was given to Sa`d ibn Abadah al-Ansari, with orders to enter Mecca as the advancing party. Sa`d entering Mecca, saying, "Today is going to be a big day, a day of retaliation, a day when Mecca will be looted." Hearing this, Abbas, uncle of the Holy Prophet (ص), came to the Holy Prophet (ص) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Sa`d has very serious

intentions against Quraish. He may carry on a massacre."The Holy Prophet (ص) called Imam Ali (ع) and said, "O Ali (ع)! Go and take the command from Sa`d and do what is needed. He will not be unhappy in handing over the command to you and to you in particular." Imam Ali (ع) took over the command of the expedition and entered the city, declared perfect amity and peace and waited for the Holy Prophet (ص). When the Holy Prophet (ص) entered Mecca, he went straight to the Ka`ba and started removing the idols placed there. Some of them were placed on a very high platform where his hands would not reach, he asked Ali (ع) to mount on his back and remove the idols. Ali (ع) obeyed the order, mounted on his back and was removing the idols when the Holy Prophet (ص) asked "O Ali (ع)! how do you find yourself? Imam Ali (ع) replied, "O Messenger of Allah! I find myself on such an eminent place that I feel as if my head is resting on the Empyrean of Allah the Almighty. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (ص) replied "O Ali (ع), how fortunate you are, doing the work of Allah and how fortunate I am that I am bearing your burden (Imam Ahmed's Musnad, Vol. I p. 151).

At the occasion, a poet presented a praise in praise of Imam Ali (ع).

I am asked to praise Ali (ع) in verses,
Because recital of his praises will
Release a man from Hell.
I replied to them, how can I praise
A man whose attributes are so sublime
That men got confused over these attributes
And started apotheosizing him.
He has placed his foot at such an eminent
Place, that according to the Holy Prophet (ص),
It is the place on which, on the night of
Mi`raj, Allah has placed His hand of
Grace and Mercy.

Hearing this praise, the Holy Prophet (ص) rewarded the poet handsomely.

The second important event was the massacre of Banu Jazimah at the hands of Khalid ibn al-Walid and reparations carried by Imam Ali (ع) under orders of the Holy Prophet (ص) (Refer to section 15 p. 28).

During the month of Shawwal of that year, the Muslims faced certain powerful tribes of Arabs on the battlefield of Hunain. Ali (ع) again

secured a victory for them (Refer to section 15 p. 28). Hunain was followed by an expedition to Thaef under the command of Imam Ali (ع). Those who had run away from Hunain had gathered there and wanted to measure their strength once again. The commander of their army who was the chiefs of Banu Zaigham clan was killed by Imam Ali (ع), which broke the back of resistance and various parties of hostile clans started dispersing. Seeing the Holy Prophet (ص) raised the siege and brought the expedition to an end.

In the same year Imam Ali (ع) was sent to Yemen on a missionary service. He carried on this work so successfully and his speeches there proved so effective that the tribe of Banu Hamdan embraced Islam as one entity (refer to Section 15, p. 29 of the same reference).

9 A.H.

The 9th year of the Hijra relates four important incidents of Imam Ali's life.

The first was the expedition to Thatul-Salasil. Ali (ع) brought it to a successful end, defeated the clans gathered there to invade Medina and brought the happy news to the Holy Prophet (ص). The Messenger of Allah came out of Medina to welcome the warrior. Ali (ع) was riding a horse at the head of his army, saw the Holy Prophet (ص) walking towards him and jumped from his horse. The Prophet (ص) told him, "Kkeep on riding, do not dismount, Allah and His Prophet (ص) are really pleased with your services." The Prophet (ص) made him remount his horse and he walked along with the horse (refer to Hamra'ul-Ashira and Ma'arijul-Nubuwwa).

The second event was the Holy Prophet's expedition in person to Tabuk, which I have narrated in Section 16, p. 30.

The third important event in the life of Ali (ع) and in the history of Islam was the reading of the Chapter (Sura) Bara'at before the infidels of Mecca. This Sura declares that Allah and his Messenger in the future will have nothing to do with the infidels and polytheists. All the treaties which existed till then were now annulled and cancelled. No polytheist or infidel would, in the future, be allowed to enter the city of Mecca or the

precincts of Kaba. Imam Hakim in his Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 32, Al-Riadul-Nadira, Vol. 2, p. 203, the Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. I p. 331, Al-Isaba fi Ma'rifatil-Sahaba, Vol. IV, p. 270 and Izalatul-Khafa', Section 2, p. 261 say that the Holy Prophet (ص) first ordered Abū Bakr to convey this Sura to Mecca and to read it at the Kaba. But immediately after him he sent Imam Ali (ع) to replace Abu Bakr on the mission. When Abu Bakr complained about this change, the Messenger of Allah replied, "I have done it under orders of Allah which came explicitly that either I should perform this duty or somebody who is like me."

The fourth event took place in Najran, a city in the province of Yemen. It was center of the Christian Missionary activities in Southe rn Arabia. The Holy Prophet (ص) had written to the Chief priest of the city to realize the blessings of Islam. In reply he wrote that he would like to personally discuss the teachings of this new religion. His name was Harith. He was invited and came with a retinue of fourteen priests. The priests stayed at Medina as guests of the Holy Prophet (ص). Long discussions about monotheism versus trinity took place and it was realized that these priests were not open minded. On the contrary, they were prejudiced against Islam. The Almighty ordered the Holy Prophet (ص) to explain to them that AVerily Jesus is as Adam in the sight of Allah. He created him out of dust. He then said unto him, "Be!"and he was. AThis is the truth from Your Master; be not, therefore, one of those who doubt, and whoever shall dispute with you after the knowledge which hath been given you, say unto them, come let us call together our sons and your sons, our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves. Then let us make imprecations and lay the curse of Allah upon those who lie. (Surat Ali Imran, Chap. III).

According to Aamir ibn Sa`d and Ummul-Mu'minin Aisha, when the above verses were revealed to the Messenger of Allah he called Ali (ع), Fatima (ع), Hassan and Hussain (ع) and said, "Master! This is my family and progeny (Ahl al-Bayt)." (Bukhari's Sira, Parts VII p. 77, Saree Muslim, Vol. 2 p. 278, al-Tirmidhi, P. 421, Misquath Vol. 8, p. 129)

Imam Fukhrud-Din al-Razi (in Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Vol. 2, p. 701, printed in Egypt) says that when the above verses were revealed the Prophet of Allah (ص) covered himself with a black coverlet, took in it Ali (ع), Fatima (ع), Hassan and Hussain (ع) and said, "Master! This is my progeny, my household and my family (Ahl al-Bayt)."Thereupon, the Messenger of the master received the following revelation: "Verily! Allah

desires to remove from you every abomination, you the Household of the Prophet, and to purify you with a perfect purification"(33: 33). (Tafsir Khshshaf, Vol. I, p. 308 agrees with Imam Fakhrud-Din al-Razi).

Hearing the glad news of the Divine Purification, Sanctification and Consecration, the Holy Prophet (ص) decided to take only these four persons along with him for the ceremony of trial by imprecations as ordered by Allah. That is, Ali (ع) representing the selves as mentioned in the above verses, Fatima (ع) representing women, Hassan and Hussain (ع) representing sons.

The Christian priests were then informed of these orders of Allah and said, "They agreed next morning to abide by the trial as a quick way of deciding which of them were in the wrong. Muhammad (ص) met them accordingly accompanied by his daughter Fatima (ع), his son-in-law Ali (ع) and his two grandsons Hassan and Hussain (ع) and desired them (the Christian priests) to wait till he had said his prayers. But when they saw him kneel down their resolution failed them and they dared not venture to curse him and his party, but agreed to sign a treaty and pay tribute to him" (Rev. George Sale).

Ahl al-Bayt (ع), people of the Household (of Muhammad [ص]), is the designation usually given to Fatima (ع), Ali (ع) and their children and descendants. This is the name by which ibn Khaldun invariably designates them and followers and disciples, Shi`as or adherents of the "People of the House." Sanai (the famous Sufi poet whom Rumi praises) represents the general feeling with which the descendants of Muhammad (ص) were regarded in the following verses of poetry:

Excluding the book of Allah and his family (Descendants),
Nothing has been left by Ahmed the Prophet (ص),
Memorial such as these can never be obtained
Till the day of Judgment.

See The Spirit of Islam, p. 313; note, Kanzul-Ummal Vol. VI, p. 159, Tafsir al-Kushshaf, Vol. 1, p. 308, al-Hamadani in Mawaddat al-Qurba and Allama Ibn Hajar al-Makki in Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, while discussing this event and the verses referred above, have given their opinion that the Holy Prophet (ص), by translating the word "selves" as himself and Ali (ع), the word "women" as Fatima (ع) and the word "sons"

as Hassan and Hussain (ع) have shown to the Muslim the estimation in which these four persons are held by Allah and by himself. They and they alone are his Ahl al-Bayt (ع) who deserve the Divine purification, sanctification and consecration.

10 A.H.

During this year, Ali (ع) was sent once again on a propagation mission to Yemen then on an expedition against Amr ibn M'adi Karb. He performed both the duties successfully. Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal in his Musnad, Vol. V, p. 356, Imam Nisa'i in Khasa'is and Allama ibn Hajr al-Makki in Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, p. 2, say that from the later expedition Khalid ibn al-Walid sent a letter containing complaints of Imam Ali (ع) to the Holy Prophet (ص). This letter was carried by Buraydah, a companion of the Holy Prophet (ص). On receipt of this letter, the Messenger of Allah was annoyed and got angry and said, "You are fabricating lies and fictitious complaints against Ali (ع); he is from me and I am from him; he is your master (wali) after me. Whoever annoys him actually annoys me, and whoever forsakes him forsakes me. He is made of the same mold that I am made of, and I am made of the same mold that Abraham is made of, and my status with Allah is superior to that of Abraham."

The end of the 10th A.H. saw the Holy Prophet (ص) perform the Farewell Pilgrimage. Returning from there, for the last time he designated Imam Ali (ع) as his Vicegerent.

11 A.H.

The year 11 A.H. was the saddest year of Imam Ali's life. He lost two of his best friends. One of whom he loved and venerated like a father, like a master and like the dearest friend, the Holy Prophet (ص) who died during the early months of the year. His death was followed by the death of Imam Ali's dearest companion, his wife, Fatima (ع), the lady of the Light.

The last year of Holy Prophet's life was spent at Medina. An envoy of his was killed by the Syrians and he had ordered an expedition against the Byzantines under Usamah ibn Zaid and he had ordered all his companions except Imam Ali (ع) join this expedition and had ordered the troops to be encamped outside the city (al-Tabari's Tarikh, Tarikh al-

Kamil ibn Athir. Tabaqat al ibn Sa`d and Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, Madarij al-Nubuwwah, Vol. 2, p. 766). Although he was ill, and in spite of his weakness, he came out, arranged the flag (the Insignia of the command) with his own hands and handed it over to Usamah. He felt that people were not willing to join this expedition because of the young age of Usamah. He got annoyed and said, "May the curse of Allah be on those who forsake the army of Usamah."(Al-Milal wal-Nihal of allama Shahristani and Sharh al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya).

The cause of this illness was the poison which had been given to him and which had slowly penetrated into his system and had now begun to show its effect. It became evident that he had not long to live. The news of his approaching end led to the stopp. of the expedition (The Spirit of Islam). At the last stage of illness the Holy Prophet (ص) was staying at the house of Ummul Mu'minin Aisha. From there he came out for the last time to lead the prayers. He was so weak that he was actually carried there by the sons of Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib. He, himself, led the prayers (Fath al-Bari, Sharah Sirat al-Bukhari, Ch. 3, p. 372).

This exertion proved too much for the messenger of the master and when he returned home from the mosque he fainted. His condition was very serious at that time and the fainting fit was of long duration. His children and members of family and his companions started weeping and lamenting. He came out of the swoon and looked at those tear sprinkled faces around him and said, "Bring a pen, some ink and paper so that I may write a will for you that will keep you on the straight path."Some of his companions wanted to offer him the pen and paper while `Umar was of the opinion that he was talking insanely on account of the intensity of his illness. He argued that they had the Holy Quran with them which would suffice them. This discussion took a serious turn and people started arguing in loud voices. The Messenger of Allah got annoyed at this and asked them to go away and to leave him alone. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Ch. 12, p. 126, Ch. 8, p. 100, Ch. 23, p. 384, Minhaj al-Sunna of allama Ibn Taymiyyah, Sharh Sahih Muslim of Allama Noodi, gives a detailed account of this event).

This was Sunday the 27th Safar. After the above incident the Messenger of Allah called Ali (ع) and said, "Ali! You will be first to meet me on the fountain of Kawthar. After me, when hardship and reverses face you, do not lose patience, and when you find people running after worldly gains, then you should busy yourself in the way of disseminating the truth and serving Allah. (Rawzat al-Ahbab, Vol. I, p. 559, Madarij al-

Nubuwwah, Vol. 2, p. 551). On the next day, Monday the 28th of Safar, the Messenger of Allah passed away to the realm of His Grace, Blessings and Majesty.

The Last Moment and Burial Rites of the Holy Prophet (ص)

Allama Muhammad ibn Sa`d, in his famous book Tabaqat (Vol. 2, Section 2, pp. 51, 61) relates that during the caliphate of `Umar, the famous Jew Ka`b al-Ahbar (who later embraced Islam), asked once the caliph: "Sir, please tell me what the last words of the Holy Prophet were."The Caliph told him to ask Imam Ali (ع) about it. Ka`b went to Ali (ع) and asked him the same question. The Imam (ع) replied, "During the last moments of the Holy Prophet (ص) his head was resting on my shoulder and his words were: Salat! Salat! (Uphold prayers, prayers!)."Ka`b declared, "Verily, the last moments of all prophets have always been thus; they are ordained for it, and they carry the message even with their last breath." Then Ka`b went to `Umar and asked him: "Who performed the ghusul for the body of the Prophet after his death?" The caliph told him to ask Imam Ali (ع) about that, too. He again went to Imam Ali (ع) and repeated the question. Imam Ali (ع) replied, "The Messenger of Allah had willed that none but I should perform those ablutions because if any other person looked at his naked body he would get blind. A curtain was hung and from the other side of the curtain Fazl ibn Abbes and Usamah, blind-folded, were handing water to me and I was performing the ghusul."

These facts, that Imam Ali (ع) was the only person to be with the Holy Prophet (ص) at his last moments and to have performed the last rights, are also acknowledged by the authors of these books: Tadhkirat Khawassl al-A'imma, Ch. II, p. 16, Kanzul Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 55, Mustadrak of Imam Hakim, Vol. 3, p. 139, Riad al-Nadira, printed in Egypt, p. 80 and Mu'jam al-Kabir of al-Tabrani.

After the last ablutions and after shrouding the sacred body of the Messenger of Allah as per his will, first Imam Ali (ع) performed the Adeath prayers' alone. Then the parties of the Muslims came and offered the death prayers without any leader (Imam). Allama ibn Abdul Birr in Al-Isti`ab says that after Imam Ali (ع) offered his A Death prayers' alone then Banu Hashim offered the prayers, then the Muhajirun then the Ansar.

Burial of the Holy Prophet (ص)

After the death, prayers were performed. Imam Ali (ع), Abbas, Fazl ibn Abbas and Usamah ibn Zaid got busy with the arrangements of the burial of the Messenger of Allah. At the request of the Ansar, Aws ibn Kholee al-Ansari, who was also a Badri (a participant in the Badr campaign), was allowed to join them. Usamah dug the grave in the house of Ummul Mu'minin (mother of the faithful) Aisha. Aws got into the grave and Imam Ali (ع) lifted the sacred body in his hands and lowered it into the grave. He stayed in the grave for some time weeping bitterly. Usamah says, "I have never seen Ali (ع) weeping like that before or after this occasion." Then Ali (ع) came out of the grave and, lifting his hands, said, "Lord! He was Your first creation; his death is not a sign of mortality; he lifted the gloom prevailing before the creation started; he was a proof of Your Glory and Benevolence. He had come to us from the realm of Your Love and Glory and was our guide towards that Realm. His soul was the Emblem of Your Supreme Might, his body was the masterpiece of Your Creation and his mind was Your Treasure house." Then he covered the grave (Irshad of Shaikh al-Mufid).

When Ali (ع) and Banu Hashim were busy with the last rites of the burial of the Messenger of Allah, some Muhajirun and Ansar gathered at the saqifa of Banu Sa`ida and decided [with the persuasion of `Umar ibn al-Khattab] that Abu Bakr should be the first caliph [forgetting, or pretending to have forgotten, their oath of allegiance to Ali (ع) as the successor of the Prophet (ص)]. Imam Ali (ع) was asked to accede to this decision. He refused. Abu Sufyan came to Medina and went to Abbas (uncle of the Holy Prophet (ص) and said to him, "People have taken away the caliphate from Banu Hashim. You are the uncle of the Messenger of Allah and the oldest among the tribesmen of Quraish. You have been kind to them also. They will accept your leadership. Let you and I swear the oath of allegiance to Ali (ع). If anybody opposes us, we shall kill him." They both went to Ali (ع). Abu Sufyan said to him, "Ali! If you like, I shall overflow Medina with infantry and cavalry; do accept our proposal. Stretch your hand and let us swear the oath of allegiance to you." Hearing this, Ali (ع) replied, "Abu Sufyan! I swear by Allah Almighty that you, through this proposal, want to create serious dissension among the Muslims. You have always tried to harm Islam. I do not need your sympathy or your help."

A detailed account of this event may be found in
1. Tabari, Vol. 21, pp. 202, 303
2. Tarikh al-Khulafa, p. 45
3. Kanzul-`Umml Vol. 2I, p. 140.

Imam Ali (ع) realized that any serious dissension at this stage would harm the cause of Islam considerably. He had before him the example of the Holy Prophet (ص) and treaty of Hudaybiya and had been foretold by the Holy Prophet (ص) of all that would happen. Allama Ali ibn Muhammad (630 A.H.) in Usd al-Ghaba fi Thamyiz al-Sahaba (Vol. IV, p. 31) says, "The Holy Prophet (ص) had said to Imam Ali (ع), 'Your status is like that of the Ka`ba. People (Muslims) approach the Ka`ba, but this holy house never approaches anybody. Therefore, after my death, if people come to you and swear the oath of allegiance to you, accept it, and if they do not come to you, then you should not go to them.'"

Allama Shaikh Abdul Haqq, the traditionist al-Dehlawi, in Madarij al-Nubuwwa (Vol. 2, p. 511) says that the Holy Prophet (ص) had advised Imam Ali (ع) saying, "After me, you will have to face the extremes of suffering. Do not get disheartened and do not lose patience, and when you find people craving for and trying their utmost to secure worldly power and wealth you mold your life for the hereafter."

Imam Ali (ع) loved Islam as intensely as the Holy Prophet (ص) had loved it. He could not, therefore, for the sake of worldly kingdom endanger Islam. He knew that a civil war at that stage would give chances to the Jewish clans of Banu Nazir and Banu Quraiza on one side and the Christian tribes of Najran and Syria by the Byzantine armies on the other. The munafiqun (hypocrites) and fresh converts on the third would simply take advantage of the situation. When they found the Muslims busy killing each other, they would literally cut them into pieces and Islam would totally disappear as a message of peace. He wanted the Arabs to remain in the fold of Islam even with the desires of making their worldly status good and wanted the enemies of Islam to realize that Islam was powerful enough to defend itself even after the sad demise of the Messenger of the master. Therefore, he was willing to accept every wrong for the Islam and to retire to the seclusion of his house. The advice he gave to his uncle Abbas is to be found in Nahjul-Balagha wherein he told him not to join the turmoil.

According to the famous Arab philosopher, mathematician and physician Avicenna (Abu Ali Ibn Sina), Imam Ali (ع) and the Holy Quran were the two miracles of Muhammad (ص), the Messenger of Allah. The life of Imam Ali (ع) at every stage was a mirror like the reflection of the life of the Holy Prophet (ص). The days of Badr, Uhud, Khayber and Hunain were not long passed and their hero still had the same courage, valor, bravery and strength with him. He could have jumped at the proposal of Abu Sufyan, but had he done so he would not have been Ali ibn Abu Talib, the man Awho loved Allah and His Messenger and was loved by Allah and His Messenger (Ma`arij al-Nubuwwa).

Death of Fatima (ع)

Unfortunately, his feelings were not reciprocated. The following books provide an account of very serious events which happened at Imam Ali's refusal to accede to the decision at the saqifa:

1. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 198.
2. Al-Iqd al-Farid of Ibn Abd Rabbih, Vol. 2, p. 179, printed in Egypt.
3. History of Abul-Fida' Vol. 1, p. 156 printed in Egypt.
4. Kitab Imama wal Siyasa of Allama Ibn Qutaybah, Vol. I, p. 20, printed in Egypt (this book gives a very detailed account)
5. Muruj al-Dhahab by al-Mas`udi, p. 159
6. Al-Milal wal-Nihal of al-Shahristani, Vol. I, p. 25 printed in Bombay, India
7. Al-Faruq of al-Shibli al-Nu`mani, printed in India
8. Ibn Abul-Hadid in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balagha.

What one could gather, from various accounts which these books have given, is a sad and pathetic episode. It appears that though Imam Ali (ع) decided to retire to the seclusion of his house and not to take any part in power politics, his house was burned down on his family and him. And either the burning door or a hard hit from the hilt of a sword or a heavy push or all together broke the ribs and hand of Fatima (ع) (daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص). This caused her such a serious injury that the baby she was carrying was a still- birth. Allama Shahristani, in Al-Milal wal-Nihal (Vol. I, p. 25), says that there was nobody in the house but Ali (ع), Fatima (ع) and their children (who were between the ages of 4 to 8). Apparently, the assault was sudden and unexpected; nobody was ready for it. The resulting confusion could be better imagined than narrated. The lady of

the house was seriously hurt and had fainted, the house was full of smoke, the children were frightened. As Ali (ع) was attending to his wounded wife and suffocating children he was overpowered and dragged from the house. Later Fatima (ع) was refused her heritage. The physical injury and themental shock laid her low and after a short illness she passed away on the 14th of Jamadul-Awwal, 11 A.H. She was buried in the dead of the night. Besides Banu Hashim only the following companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) attended her funeral: Salman, Abu Dharr, Ammar and Miqdad. Before the death she had expressed her sufferings in a poem, a verse of which has come down in the Arabic language as a proverb. She says, "So many calamities have descended upon me that if they had descended upon bright days, they would have been turned into dark nights."

The account of the last day of her life clearly shows what kind of a lady was this daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص). She told the household that she was feeling better, the pain in her ribs and in her hand was not so severe and that her fever had come down. Then she started bathing the children. Immediately Ali (ع) and Fizza came to her assistance. She got the children bathe d, dressed and fed, then sent them away to her cousin. Then she called Imam Ali (ع) to her side and said, "Ali (ع), my dear husband! You know very well why I did all that. Please excuse my fussiness; they have suffered so much with me and during my illness that I want to see them happy on the last day of my life. Yes, Ali (ع), you know also that this is the last day of my life. I am happy and also sad. Happy I am that my troubles will shortly be over and I shall meet my father, and I am sad because I shall part with you. Please, Ali (ع), make a note of what I say and do as I wish you to do. After me, you may marry anybody you like, but you must marry my cousin Yamama; she loves my children and Hussain is very much attached to her. Let Fizza remain with you even after her marriage, if she so desires; she was more than a mere servant to me. I loved her like my daughter. Ali, bury me in the night and do not let those who have been so cruel to me attend my burial. Let not my death dishearten you. You have to serve Islam and humanity for a long time to come. Let not my sufferings embitter your life, promise me Ali." Imam Ali (ع) said, "Yes, Fatima, I promise." "Ali," she continued, "I know how you love my children, but be very careful about Hussain (ع). He loves me dearly and will miss me sadly, be a mother to him as well. Till my recent illness, he used to sleep on my chest; he is already missing it." Ali (ع) was by then caressing the broken hand, his hot and large tears

dropped on her hand. She looked up and said, “Do not weep, Ali. I know that despite an outwardly tough appearance, the heart you possess is quite tender. You have already borne too much and will have to bear more. Farewell, my Imām, farewell my dear husband; farewell Ali. Bid Fatima farewell.” Hearing his farewell, she said, “May the merciful Master help you bear these sorrows and sufferings patiently. Now let me be alone with my God.” Saying this, she turned towards her prayer mat and prostrated before Allah. After a short while, Imam Ali (ع) entered the room. He found her still in prostration but her soul had already departed to join her Holy father in the realm of His Grace, Mercy and Might. She died very young as Imam Ali (ع) says, “... a flower nipped in the bud; she was a flower from Paradise, and she went back to Paradise, leaving the fragrance of Paradise behind her in my mind.”

From 12 A.H. To 24 A.H.

From that time onward till 35 A.H. Imam Ali (ع) led a reclusive life. In the beginning, he spent his days compiling the Holy Quran in the chronological order of chapters and verses as they were revealed to the Holy Prophet (ص). He presented this to the Muslims, but when its acceptance was refused, he advised his companions to accept the Holy Book as compiled officially, saying that his compilation would not be seen by anybody, so that there might not come into existence more than one version of the Holy Quran and might not create doubts about the authenticity of this sacred Book.

When Abu Sufyan found that Imam Ali (ع) was not paying attention to him, he tried to get in the good books of the government and his eldest son Yazid was appointed as the governor of Syria and on Yazid’s death, his brother Mu`awiyah was appointed on the same post.

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr and more often during the time of Umar, whenever Ali’s advice was asked for, he, like a true Muslim, offered his sincere advice.

Although the people of Banu Hashim were never given any place of honor within the government, Ali (ع) did not mind this indifference and whenever a serious problem arose and his counsel was sought, he cooperated whole-heartedly.

The Spirit of Islam says, “From the commencement of the Islamic preaching, Imam Ali (ع) had extended the utmost consideration and friendship to the conquered. After the battle of Qadisiyya, Ali (ع) used to devote his share of prize money to freeing of captives and repeatedly with his counsel and persuasive interference, he persuaded Umar to lighten the burden of subjects and captives.”

Imam Hakim, in his Mustadrak, and Ibn al-Athir in his history say that until the year 17 A.H. there was no calendar fixed by the Muslims. Sometimes, Amul-Feel (year of the Abyssinian invasion of Mecca) was considered as the beginning of an era. At other times, the battle of Fujjar (a pre-Islamic encounter between Arab clans) was chosen. Still, others considered a time when repairs on the Ka`ba were done as the year to mark the era. When this confusion was brought to the attention of Umar, he asked the advice of Imam Ali (ع) who told him to begin the Muslim era from the year of the Hijra (migration of the Holy Prophet [ص]) from Mecca to Medina.

On another occasion, the people went to Umar saying that a lot of jewels and valuable articles and attachments in the Ka`ba could be converted into currency and be used for arming the armies, proving to be a very useful asset. When Imam Ali’s advice was sought he said, “These articles were there during the times of the Holy Prophet (ص) but he did not touch them. Although Muslims were poorer then than now, and although they were more in need of arms and mounts then, but the Holy Prophet (ص) still did not make use of those ornaments for such purposes. It shows that the Messenger of Allah did not care much about such things. You also do not do it. Hearing this, `Umar said, “O Ali! Had you not been here, we would have suffered a disgrace” according to Rai`ul-Abrar of Allama Zamakhshari.

On the occasion of the invasion of Rome, when Umar sought his counsel as to the advisability of heading the army as the Commander-in-Chief, he advised him to be at the helm and to send some experienced general as a commander. This advice is narrated in a sermon in Nahjul-Balagha. Similarly, at the time of invasion of Iran, he counselled `Umar not to leave the capital and to send somebody else.

The books Izalatul Khafa’ (subject II, p. 268 and 269), Al-Riaz al-Nadira Vol. 2, pp. 194 to 197), Musnad Imam Ahmed Vol. 2, p. 231 (Margin), Mustadrak Imam al-Hakim Vol. I, pp. 438 to 460, Al-Isti`ab of

allama Abdul Birr Vol. 2 474) and Ihya'ul-`Ulum of Imam Ghazali, cite several such cases where the Imam's counsel was asked for and he sincerely gave his advice.

Only one case I want to relate shows in what high esteem Ali (ع) held the value of the knowledge acquired, collected and preserved by man in the fields of philosophy, science, history, geography and ethics.

The following authors give a detailed account of the famous library of Iskandariyya (Alexandria) in Egypt:

1. Judge Abul-Qasim Sa`d ibn Ahmed al-Andalusi (462 A.H.) in Tabaqat al-Umam.
2. Haji Khalifa Chulpee in Khashf al-Zunun, Vol. I, Preface, p. 24, printed in Egypt.
3. The famous biographer Ibn Nadim in Al-Fahrist, p. 334, printed in Egypt.
4. The historian Jamal ud-Din, known as Ibn al-Qifti, in Akhbarul-Ulema' wa Akhbar al-Hukama', pp. 232, 233, printed in Egypt and also in Liepzieg, Germany.
5. Imam Hafizud-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Shahal, known as Ibnul-Bazzaz al-Kurmi (827 A.H.), in Kitab Imam al-A'zam, Vol. I, p. 37, printed in Hyderabad, India.
6. Allama Ahmed ibn Mustafa, known as ATashul-Kubra Zada (962 A.H.) in Miftahul-Sa'ada and Misbahul-Siyada, Vol. 1, p. 241, printed in Hyderabad, India.

They are unanimous in saying that there was a fairly large library at Alexandria, Egypt. It contained between five to seven thousand books on papyri, pal, leaves and parchments, a very large library indeed when compared with the standard of literacy and education of those days.

It contained books on chemistry, astronomy, irrigation, engineering, physics, philosophy and various religions etc.

When Amr ibn al-As conquered Egypt, he inquired as to what was to be done with those books. Orders were issued from the Center that All of these books are according to the Holy Quran (i.e. They say the same things which this Holy book has said), then we do not need them, and if they say anything contrary to the Holy Quran, then we do not want them. Therefore, in either case, they ought to be burnt according to Akhbarul-`Ulema' wa Akhbar al-Hukama' of Ibn al-Qufti, pp. 232 and 233, printed in Cairo and Leipzieg.

The history of Muhammad ibn Abdo edited by Allama Rashid Rida, Editor, Al-Manar, Cairo, Egypt, Vol. 1, p. 535, Tabaqat al-Umam of Judge Sa'id al-Andalusi, as well as Al-Ayat al-Bayyinat of Muhsinul-Mulk, say that when Imam Ali (ع) heard the news of this, he tried to persuade them to refrain from issuing such an order. He said, "Those books are treasures of knowledge and they cannot say anything against the Holy Quran. On the contrary, the knowledge contained the rein would act as commentaries of this Holy Book and would assist and help in further explanations of the knowledge as presented by the Holy Prophet (ص). Knowledge is an asset for human beings and a birthright of a man. It should not be destroyed. Akhbarul-Ulema' further states that his suggestion was not accepted and those books were distributed among one thousand hot water bath houses of Alexandria to be burnt as fire wood.

From 11 A.H. To 33 A.H.

Shortly before his death, Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor to the caliphate and, `Umar, upon his death, appointed a board of six members to select his successor; the board considered (1) Abdul Rshman ibn Awf, (2) Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (3), Othman ibn Affan (4), Talhah ibn Abdullah (5), al-Zubair ibn al- Awwam and (6) Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). The terms of reference for this council were as follows:

1. If they unanimously selected a person, he would be designated as the caliph.
2. If there was no unanimity, then that person would be caliph for whom Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf and his party voted.
3. If any five of them agreed on one man and the sixth disagreed, then the dissenter should immediately be killed.
4. If any four of them agreed on one man then two disagreed, then those two should be killed.
5. If there was a tie, then the casting vote would be that of Abdullah ibn `Umar (his son). Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf was a cousin of Othman and husband of the aunt of Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas and al-Zubair was the son-in-law of Abu Bakr. Abdu- Rahman ibn `Awf withdrew his candidacy to the caliphate.

(Refer to Kitabul-Imama walSiyasa of Muhammad ibn Qutaybah al-Daynuri (270 A.H.), p. 26, History of Ibn Khaldun, second part, pp. 134 to 136, printed in Egypt).

In the council, the opinions were equally divided in favor of Imam Ali (ع) and Othman. Abdul-Rahman ibn Oaf asked Imam Ali (ع), "If you are selected as a caliph, do you promise that you will act according to the Holy Quran and the traditions and orders of the Holy Prophet (ص) and according to the rulings and decisions of the previous two caliphs? Imam Ali (ع) replied, "So far as the Holy Quran and the orders and traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) are concerned, I agree to abide by them and follow them faithfully and sincerely, but so far as the rulings and decisions of the previous two caliphs are concerned, if these are according to the Holy Book and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) who could dare refuse them. If they are against the orders of Allah or the Holy Prophet (ص), who would dare accept and follow them? I refuse to bind myself with those rulings and decisions. I shall act according to my knowledge and my discretion."

Then Abdul-Rahman asked the same question of Othman. The latter agreed not only to act according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) but also to implicitly follow the rulings and the decisions of the previous two caliphs. Abdul-Rahman declared `Othman as a caliph. Refer to 1. Tabari, Vol. 5, pp. 35 to 38, Vol. 16, p. 590) 2. Ibn Khaldun, p. 134 to 136, 3. Abul-Fida', p. 34, 4. Rawzatul-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 98.

Muharrum 1, 24 A.H.

Justice Sayyid Amir Ali, in his book titled A Short History of the Saracens, p. 46, says, "The choice of electorate fell upon Othman, a member of the Ummayad family (Muharram, 1, 24 A.H. November 7, 644 A.D.). In the end, his election proved to be the ruin of Islam. He fell at once under the influence of his clan. He was guided entirely by his secretary and son-in-law Marwan, who had once been expelled by the Pprophet for a breach of trust. With Ali's usual patriotism and devotion to the faith, he gave his adhesion to Othman as soon as he was elected. Othman displaced most of the lieutenants employed by Umar and appointed in their stead incompetent and worthless members of his own family. The weakness of the center and the wickedness of the unworthy favorites was creating a great agitation among the people. Loud complaints of exaction and oppression by the governors began pouring into the capital. Ali (ع) pleaded and tried to reason several times with the caliph concerning the manner in which he allowed the government to fall into the hands of the unworthy favorites, but Othman, under the influence

of his evil genius Marwan, paid no heed to the Imam's advice. Twice, Imam Ali (ع) was asked to leave Medina and to go to a village near it and twice he was called back to intervene between the ruler and the ruled. A few sermons in Nahjul-Balagha has related these facts. To continue the version of the short History of the Saracen, At last, a deputation from the provinces arrived in Medina to demand redress. They were sent back with promises. On their way home, they intercepted a letter by Marwan, purporting to bear the seal of the caliph. This letter contained directions to the local governors to behead the leaders of the deputation upon arrival of their destinations. Furious at this treachery, the representatives returned to Medīna and demanded the surrender of Marwan. This demand was requested even by members of the house of Ummyyah; refer to al-Mas`udi's Muruj al-Dhahab. The ill-fated `Othman met this demand with a stern refusal. Enraged at what they believed to be the complicity of the caliph, they besieged him at his home (A Short History of the Saracen, pp. 47 and 48).

Narrating the details of the siege and the murder, Tarikh al-Khamis (Vol. 2, pp. 61, 262), Tarikh al-Khulafa' by al-Sayyuti, p. 108, Muruj al-Dhahab of al-Mas`udi and Al-Riaz al-Nadira, Vol. 2, p. 125, say that at this hour of peril, the Ummayyad deserted the old chief and some fled towards Syria. Mu`awiyah, though ordered by the caliph, did not come to his help. On the contrary, the contingent which he sent to Medina was ordered to stop and stay at a place thirty miles away from Medina and wait for further orders. These orders never arrived until the caliph was killed and the contingent was called back. But Imam Ali (ع) sent water and food to the caliph during the siege and later, as per the Imam's orders, Othman was bravely defended by his sons and dependents. The insurgents had great difficulty in making any impression on the defenders; therefore, on the 18th of Dhul-Hijja 34 A.H. some of these besiegers scaled a wall of a neighbor's house, entered the house of the caliph and killed him inside his house.

The people who were furious against the caliph were:

1. **Talhah**: He played an important role in the siege and the cutting of water supply. He was commanding the group of the people who were bent upon killing Othman. On that account, Marwan killed him in the Battle of Jamal as we read in Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 154, Kamil ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 70, and in Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, p. 397). This very Talhah later came out as the avenger of murder of the caliph and carried out the propaganda that Imam Ali (ع) was responsible for Othman's murder. He

was one of the chief instigators of the Battle of Jamal. He had instigated the people to kill `Othman with the hope of succeeding the caliphate. When he was frustrated with it, he launched a rebellion against Imam Ali (ع) (Refer to sermon 179 of Nahjul-Balagha).

2**. Al-Zubair ibn al-`Awwam** was considered the number one enemy of the caliph (Mustadrak of Imam Hakim, Vol. 2I, p. 118, Kitabul-Imama wal-Siyasa, Vol. VI, p. 58, Muruj al-Dhahab of Mas`udi, Vol. 2, p. 11). Later, al-Zubair, with motives like those of Talhah, staged a rebellion against Ali (ع) and was the prime initiator for the Battle of Jamal. On the battlefield of Jamal, Imam Ali (ع) reminded him of the orders given to him by the Holy Prophet (ص) about Imam Ali (ع). Al-Zubair left the battlefield and was riding to Medina when he was killed by Umar ibn Jernuz, who was neither in Imam Ali's army nor his own companion. Imam Ali (ع) felt sad at Zubair's death and said, "Although he later turned into a bitter enemy of mine, in the early days of Islam, he was a good defender of the cause of religion (Refer to sermon 12).

3. **Amr ibn al-As** was the third bitter enemy of Othman. Tabari gives a detailed account of the way he insulted the caliph in the mosque and says, "Nobody was more pleased at the murder of Othman than Amr ibn al-As. The reason was that he had been deposed from the governorship of Egypt by the third caliph. Later, this `Umar joined Mu`awiyah as a claimant for retribution of the murder of Othman."

When the events from year **11 A.H. To 34 A.H.** were unfolding, Imam Ali (ع) took no part in the affairs of the state. In the words of The History of Saracens, "He was endeavoring in Medina to give an intellectual turn to then ewly developed energy of the Saracenic race. In the public mosque at Medina, he delivered weekly lectures on philosophy, logic, history, explanation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) and the verses of the Holy Quran, as well as Muslim law and rhetoric. Thus, he formed the nucleus of the intellectual movement which displayed itself in such a great force in the later days. Those lectures and sermons were compiled during forty years following his death by Zaid ibn Wahab al-Juhni (Rijalul-Kabeer). Many of them were lost, but some of them are preserved in Nahjul-Balagha (Mas`udi).

34 to 40 A.H.

Five days after the death of Caliph Othman, by a unanimous election in which representatives from Basra, Kufa, Egypt and Hijaz took part, Imam Ali (ع) was elected as the caliph. This took place on the 24th Dhul-Hijja, 34 A.H.

Eric Schroeder, in Muhammad's People, printed in England in 1955, says, "Five days after the murder of Caliph Othman, the people gathered together and decided: "We know no fitter man to be Imām than Ali (ع), but will he take the burden of Imamate?" Some answered, "Pressure him at home till he consents." They all gathered at Ali's house with such eagerness that they were pushing and crushing each other. They called to Ali (ع) and said, "If we go to our homes again without an Imam and caliph, such a strife will stir as will never again be stilled. You will have to consent to be our Imam and Caliph of Allah." Ali (ع) replied, "Small longings have I for this authority, yet the believers must have a chief and gladly will I accept temporal authority of someone else." "Nay! You have more right than I," said Talhah. One who stood nearby forced open Ali's palm and Talhah swore the oath of allegiance to Ali (ع). Al-Zubair did likewise and from Ali's house, they brought him to the mosque. Everybody thronged around him to swear the oath of allegiance to him as their imam and caliph.

The Spirit of Islam says, "It might have been thought that all would submit themselves before his glory; so fine and so grand. But it was not to be. Al-Zubair and Talhah, who had hoped that the choice of people might fall on either of them for caliphate, balked in their ambitious design. Smarting under the refusal of the new caliph to bestow on them the Governorship of Basra and Kufa, they were the first to raise the standard of rebellion. They were assisted by Ummul Mu'minin Aisha, who had taken a decisive part in the former elections. She was the life and soul of the insurrection and she, herself, accompanied the insurgent troops to the field riding a camel. Ali (ع), with his characteristic aversion to bloodshed, sent his cousin Abdullah ibn Abbas to adjure the insurgents by every obligation of the faith and abandon the arbitrament of war. It was to no avail. Al-Zubair and Talhah initiated a battle at a place called Khurayba and were defeated and killed. The battle is called the Battle of Jamal (camel) from Aisha's presence in a litter on a camel. Aisha was taken prisoner, treated with courtesy and consideration and escorted with every marks of respect to Medina. She was sent escorted by her brother

Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr." Refer to Asam al-Kufi, p. 147; Tabari, Vol. 4, pp. 548-565, Rawzat al-Safa, Vol. 2, Tarikh al-Dhahbi, pp. 1-21; Abul-Fida', pp. 518-520.

After the battle, Ummul Mu'minin Aisha felt that even though she had brought about this insurgence, she saw that Imam Ali (ع) was treating her with utmost courtesy and kindness. She requested that her nephew, Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, who had been commander-in-chief of the rebel forces and was taken prisoner, to be forgiven and freed. Imam Ali (ع) granted the request. Marwan got nervous thinking that as the two worst enemies of Imam Ali (ع) (Talhah and al-Zubair) were killed and (Abdullah ibn al-Zubair) was excused and pardoned, the burden of vengeance might fall upon him. He requested Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain to plead for his cause. They requested his pardon and he was also pardoned. (Years afterward, the very same Marwan made his archers shoot arrows on the dead body and bier of Imam Hassan and later he persuaded the governor of Medina, though unsuccessfully, to immediately kill Imam Hussain on his refusal to accept Yazid as the Caliph). Then an order of general amnesty, peace and forgiveness was issued. Every opponent was forgiven and every prisoner was released (al-Mas`ud al-Zahbi, p. 28).

Ali's officers and commanders in this battle, besides his sons Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, were the following companions of the Holy Prophet (ص): 1) Abdullah ibn Abbas, 2) Ammar ibn Yasir, 3) Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, 4) Hassan ibn Thabit (for whom the Holy Prophet (ص) had said that his sole testimony would be equal to the testimony of two witnesses), 5) Qays ibn Sa`d ibn `Abadah, 6) `Ubaydullah ibn Abbas, 7) Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, 8) Hajr ibn Adiy al-Kindi, 9) Adiy ibn Hatim al-Ta'i.

The victory gave Ali (ع) time to consolidate his sovereignty in Hijaz, Iraq and Egypt. According to Mas`udi, with the honesty of purpose which always distinguished him, he disregarded all advises for temporizing. Several of his advisers counseled him to defer the dismissal of the corrupt officers previously appointed until he was, himself, sure concerning who were the enemies, but this hero, without fear and reproach, refused to be guilty of any duplicity or compromise with injustice and inequity. Therefore, immediately after his accession, he gave orders for the dismissal of the corrupt and tyrannical governors, for the return of fields and states which had been previously bestowed with

public revenues among the favorites of the rulers and for the equal distribution of the public revenues among the Arabs and non-Arabs, black and whites, masters and slaves, rich and poor.

These orders gave great offence to those who had enriched themselves under former administrations and his endeavors to remedy the evils which had crept into administrations, raised a host of enemies against him. No sooner was the rebellion of Talhah and al-Zubair suppressed, Mu`awiyah, an Umayyad by descent, a man who had held the governorship of Syria since the time of Umar, raised the standard of rebellion.

Abu Sufyan, his son Mu`awiyah and his clan Banu Umayyah had little sympathy and no faith in Islam. Mas`udi, in Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. VI, says that when Abu Sufyan had grown old and blind, he was sitting in the mosque and there were Imam Ali (ع), Abdullah ibn Abbas and many other Muslims besides them. The mu'aththin (the caller to prayers) started the adhan. He reached the part, "I testify that Muhammad (ص) is the Prophet of Allah." Now Abu Sufyan said, "Look at my cousin! (meaning the Holy Prophet [ص]) See where he has placed his name! Imam Ali (ع) became angry and said that it was done by the order of Allah. Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. 2, p. 97, printed in Egypt, says that Abu Sufyan advised Banu Umayyah to treat the caliphate like a ball and to pass it on from one to another of their clan and never let the ball out of their possession, saying, "I swear that there is neither punishment nor judgement, neither the Heaven nor the Hell and neither the resurrection nor the day of Reckoning. His son and his clan accepted his teachings, followed his faith, adopted his advice and obeyed his orders.

In the very beginning, Mu`awiyah had made fools of Talhah and al-Zubair. According to Ibn Abul-Hadid, when Mu`awiyah learned that people had sworn the oath of allegiance to Imam Ali (ع), he wrote to al-Zubair that he had taken the oath of allegiance for him and for Talhah as his successor. The whole of Syria was ready to back them and they should try to overthrow Imam Ali's regime and accept the caliphate which was awaiting them in Damascus (Refer to Sermon 12 of Nahjul-Balagha). Thus, exciting these two old men, Mu`awiyah kept Imam Ali (ع) busy with their rebellion and secured time to make his government more powerful in Syria.

Talhah and al-Zubair, with their rebellion, had done a great service to Mu`awiyah's cause but now, they were no longer living to

serve his purpose. Therefore, he approached Mughirah ibn Shu`bah (who had originally tried to converge with Imam Ali (ع) but was repulsed by him), Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Walid ibn Uqbah, Abdullah ibn `Umar, Abu Huraya and Amr ibn al-As. His best friend was Amr ibn al- As. Although Mu`awiyah had to pay a heavy price (governorship of Egypt and more than 10 Laes of dinars) to purchase the fidelity and faith of Umar, the later events proved that it was the best investment that Mu`awiyah had made in his life. He also collected proofs that Ziyad ibn Abih was actually the son of Abu Sufyan (born in sin) and not the son of a slave Obayd. This change of fatherhood was officially (though shamelessly) proclaimed and Ziyad "proudly" became the natural brother of Mu`awiyah. Zaid proved himself to be a man without a conscience, without any remorse, without faith in Islam and without any consideration for human rights, but a very useful ally to Mu`awiyah. He was Mu`awiyah's second best friend. Histories of Tabari, Rawzatul-Safa, Asim al-Kufi, Muruj al-Dhahab, Abul-Fida', the Kamil of Ibn Athir may be referred to for details of the above mentioned facts. With these henchmen beside him, Mu`awiyah staged a rebellion against the elected caliph, Imam Ali (ع).

After settling Chaldea and Mesopotamia, Imam Ali (ع) was forced to march towards Syria to face Mu`awiyah's forces at a place called Siffin. The previously noted books and Simon D. Aucklay in the History of the Saracens, give a detailed account of this battle which was an extensive one.

Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 577, Rawzatul-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 425, Abul-Fida', p. 425 narrate in details the orders issued by Imam Ali (ع) to his officers and soldiers before the battle. As these orders give a clear indication of the principles and methods laid down by Imam Ali (ع) as to how jihad (holy war) should be carried on, I have briefly copied them here:

1.Never begin a war yourself, Allah does not like bloodshed, fight only in defense.

2.Never be the first to attack your enemy, repulse his attacks, but do it boldly, bravely and courageously.

3.While declaring yourself and your deeds (via the medium of rajaz [martial] poetry, a custom in hand to hand combatants), never waste your time. Instead of speaking about yourself, speak about Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص).

4.Never follow and kill those who run away from the battle or an encounter as life is dear to them. Let them live as long as death permits them to live.
5.Never kill wounded persons who cannot defend themselves.
6.Never strip naked a dead man for his coat of arms or outfit.
7.Never cut noses or ears of dead men to humiliate them.
8.Never submit to looting and arson.
9.Never assault nor insult the modesty of a woman.
10.Never hurt a woman even if she swears at you or hurts you.
11.Never hurt a child.
12.Never hurt an old or a feeble person.

This battle started on the 1st of Safar 38 A.H. And lasted for more than two months. During this period about 18 encounters took place.

In the beginning, in his usual humanitarian nature, Imam Ali (ع) endeavored to bring about a peaceful settlement. But Mu`awiyah was inflated with pride and wanted impossible conditions. To avoid unnecessary shedding of blood, Imam Ali (ع) offered to end the quarrel by personal combat, but Mu`awiyah, realizing who and what Imam Ali (ع) was, declined the challenge. In spite of every exasperation, Imam Ali (ع) commanded the troops to await the enemy's attack, to spare the fugitives and to respect the captives. Once, during the encounters, `Amr ibn al-As and at another time Bisr ibn Arta'ah, faced Imam Ali (ع) in the battlefield. They did not realize until the encounter started that the warrior facing them was Imam Ali (ع). One blow was sufficient to send them down from their horses. When they found no way of escaping his sword, each one of them, in his turn, immediately stripped naked and fell down turning their faces towards the earth and backs towards the sky. Both armies laughed at those life-saving antics and someone suggested that Imam Ali (ع) kill them. In the case of `Amr ibn al-As he replied, "I cannot kill timid dogs. He has begged for his life in a shameless and humiliating manner. I cannot dirty my arms with the blood of such a cowardly and shameless person.

These rebels were defeated in three successive battles. Mu`awiyah was ready to fly from the field when a trick of his accomplice, Amr ibn al-As, saved them from destruction. He made his mercenaries tear the Holy Quran into many pieces and to tie those pieces to their lances and standards then shout foul. Even when the sacred pages were not available, mere rags were tied to the lances. There were some persons

in the army of Imam Ali (ع) who were bribed by Mu`awiyah. Among them, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays was one. As per orders of `Amr ibn al-As, they and their soldiers desisted from the battle and forced other soldiers to desist as well. They gathered around Imam Ali (ع) and called upon him to refer the dispute to arbitration. Imam Ali (ع) saw through the ploy practiced by the rebels and tried to make his soldiers realize it, but the clamor of the army led him to consent to the course granted. He then wanted Abdullah ibn Abbas to represent his side in the arbitration. Again, a part of the army, under instigation of al-Ash`ath, demanded that a weak and old man named Abu Musa al-Ash`ari, who was also secretly hostile to Imam Ali (ع) (according to History of the Saracens), be nominated as an arbitrator from this side. There was immediate danger of serious factions arising in his own army, which might have developed in bloodshed. Therefore, Imam Ali (ع) acceded to the demand and Abu Musa was appointed as an arbitrator. Mu`awiyah was represented by the astute and cunning Umar ibn al-As. They both decided against Imam Ali (ع), who, deprived of the fruits of victory by a section of his soldiers and faithless officers, retired in disgust with a part of his army and faithful followers to Kufa.

In the battle of Siffin, one of the famous companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) Ammar ibn Yasir and another great favorite of the Holy Prophet (ص), Owais al-Qurni, fought for Imam Ali (ع) and were killed in the battle.

The men who had been, with ulterior motives, most clamorous at Siffin for arbitration, felt that their hopes could not be realized. They repudiated the arbitration and denounced it as sinful. They openly mutinied against Imam Ali (ع); therefore, they were called Kharijites. From Kufa, they withdrew to a place called Nahrawan, which was on the border of the desert. The re, they assumed a threatening attitude, killing some officers of the government and many respectable men, women and children. They refused to listen to reasonable advice, to join duty or to return home. Their conduct at last became so serious that Imam Ali (ع) was forced to attack them at Nahrawan. That encounter is called the battle of Nahrawan. The majority fought, but a few escaped to Bahrain and Ahsa [in the Eastern Province of today's Saudi Arabia, the only country in the world named after its ruling clan, Al Saud] where they formed the nucleus of a fanatical horde which later assumed various names and adopted various guises.

Abu Musa had also retired to Medina where he subsequently received a handsome yearly pension from the court of Mu`awiyah. (Refer to Tabari, Abul-Fida', Asim al-Kufi, Rawzat al-Safa, Muruj al-Dhahab, the Kamil of Ibn Athir and the Short History of the Saracens).

From the day of ascension as caliph to the last day of his life, Imam Ali (ع) did not get a day's rest and peace. It is a wonder, that facing the heavy odds that he had to encounter, how and when he could get time to introduce reforms in the government; to lay out fundamentals of grammar for Arabic language; to deliver sermons on the ology, rhetoric, philosophy of religion, wonders of creation and nature and duties of man to Allah and man; to advise people in the most persuasive style; to suppress the tendencies for innovation and schism, which had crept in the minds of Muslims or to introduce and bring into effect principles of a benign government.

After dealing with the rebellion of the Kharijites, Imam Ali (ع) had to face the problem of consolidating his control over Egypt. He had sent Qais ibn Sa`d as a governor there, but had to call him back and send Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr in his place. Unfortunately, Muhammad, though brave and sincere, was no match to Mu`awiyah and Amr ibn al-As. He was forced by Mu`awiyah into a battle. Muhammad wrote to Imam Ali (ع) who sent Malik ibn al-Ashtar for help. But Malik could not reach Egypt. He was poisoned on the way by a henchman of Mu`awiyah and died (Tabari, Vol. IV, p. 521). Muhammad was informed of this fact. That young man faced `Amr ibn al-As alone, was defeated in the encounter, killed and by the orders of Mu`awiyah, his dead body was burnt and his ashes were strewn (Tabari, Vol. IV, p. 592). Imam Ali's words at thenews of the death of Muhammad show he loved the young man and how the youth loved him. After Muhammad, Imam Ali (ع) had to send some experienced officer to Egypt. He was busy with that problem when Mu`awiyah organized bands of guerillas with orders to loot, murder, arson and rape. These bands were to attack in waves against the provinces of Hijaz, Basra, Rayy, Mosul and Harath [Herat?]. Imam Ali (ع) organized defenses of these provinces, defeated these bands and freed the country from earlier harassment.

It would have been very easy for Imam Ali (ع) to divert the minds of masses towards foreign invasion and thus make them busy in murder and plunder. It had always been done by rulers and is even today considered as the best form of employing energies of a rising nation as

well as the easiest way to form an empire to propagate religion. But Imam Ali (ع) hated bloodshed, did not believe in imperialism and had no faith in propagation of religion with a sword in one hand and the Holy Quran in the other. He believed Islam to be a message of peace and love and wanted mankind to be ruled on the basis of equity and justice. Therefore, after strengthening one province after another and fortifying their defenses, he introduced reforms to create a benign temporal state and never considered expanding his domain.

By the time he got complete control over those problems and could organize an army to liberate Syria and Egypt from the reign of terror which had held them in its sway, the fateful month of Ramadan 40 A.H. arrived.

40 A.H.

It was the 19th of Ramadan, the month of fasting of that eventful year. It was the time of morning prayers. The place was the mosque in Kufa. Imam Ali (ع) had arrived in the mosque long before the time of the prayers, had roused those who were sleeping in the mosque. Among them was Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljim al-Muradi. He was lying on his face and had hidden under his garment a sword, the blade of which had been poisoned. Imam Ali (ع) roused him and told him that it was an unhealthy way of sleeping as it hinders free breathing. He also told him that he had hidden a sword in his garment and an evil intention in his mind. Imam Ali (ع) then called the Muslims to morning prayers and led the service. It was the first part of the prayers and he was rising from the kneeling posture when the sword of Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljim descended on his head, giving him a very deep cut. It was the same sword that Imam Ali (ع) had pointed out only half an hour earlier. The prayers were disturbed. Abdul-Rahman started running and people went after him. Nobody was attending the prayers. There was confusion everywhere. But Imam Ali (ع) finished his two prostrations then reeled into the hands of his sons Hassan and Hussain. The wound which was bleeding profusely was attended to. His blood-drenched lips parted into thanks-giving prayers as he said, “Master! I thank You for rewarding me with martyrdom; how kind are You and how Gracious. May Your Mercy further lead me to the realm of Your Grace and Benevolence. Abdul-Rahman was caught by Sasa ibn Sohan and was brought before Imam Ali (ع). The hands of the murderer where tied behind his back. The Imam (ع) saw that the ropes were cutting into the flesh of the murderer. He forgot the wound of his head, the blow

which was to end his life and to cut his career in its prime. He forgot that Abdul-Rahman was a murderer. All that he saw was a human being subjected to inhuman torture. He ordered the Muslims to loosen the ropes on Abdul-Rahman's hands and treat the man humanely. This kindness touched the murderer and he started weeping. A smile played on those lips and, in a faint voice, Imam Ali (ع) said, "It is too late to repent now; you have done your deed. Was I a bad Imam or an unkind ruler?"

People carried the Imam to his house. When he saw the bright day, he said, "O daylight! You can bear testimony to the fact that during the life time of Ali, you have never, not even once, dawned and found him sleeping."

He lived two days after this event and in that interval, whenever he found time, he delivered a few sermons (sermon No. 152 is one of them). In those sermons and with his dying breath, he expressly ordered that no harshness should be used towards his murderer, who should be executed if the heirs of Imam Ali (ع) so desired, with one blow. He should not be tortured before death, his dead body should not be mutilated, members of his family should not suffer on account of his crime and his property should not be confiscated. He designated his son Imam Hassan (ع) as his vicegerent.

Thus, the last chapter closed on the history of a life which from beginning to end was filled with noble deeds, pious thoughts and sublime words and every filled hour of a glorious life. "Had Ali (ع) been allowed to reign in peace," says Oeslner, "his virtues, firmness and ascendancy of character would have perpetuated the basic principles of a good government and its simple manners. The dagger of an assassin destroyed the hope of Islam." "With him," says Osborne, "perished the truest-hearted and the best Muslim of whom the Mohammedan history has preserved the remembrance." "Seven centuries before," says Justice Amir Ali, "this wonderful man would have been apotheosized and, thirteen centuries later, his genius, talents, virtues and valor would have exerted the admiration of the civilized world. Chivalrous, humane and forbearing to the verge of weakness, as a ruler he came before his time. He was almost no match by his uncompromising love of truth, his gentleness and his merciful nature to cope with Umayyads' treachery and falsehood" (The Spirit of Islam). Justice Amir Ali further says, "To quote the language of the modern French historian, 'But for his assassination, the Muslim world might have witnessed the realization of the prophet's teaching, in actual amalgamation of the first principles of true philosophy

into positive action. The same passionate devotion to knowledge and learning which distinguished Muhammad (ص) breathed in every word of Ali (ع). With a liberality of mind, far beyond the age in which he lived, was joined a sincere devotion of spirit and earnestness of faith. His sermons, his psalms, his litanies portray a devout outlook towards the source of all good and an unbounded faith in humanity.'"

According to his will, he was buried at Najaf, a place about two miles from Kufa.

About Ali (ع), his character, his wisdom, his teaching, his services to Islam, his love of mankind, his respect to duty, his adherence to piety, truth and justice, more than eight thousands books have already been written. They are in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, English, Spanish, Italian, German, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Telugu and Tamil, a sincere homage to the sincerity of his faith in the greatness and nobility of character inherent in man and in the possibility of human beings developing these traits by good thoughts and good deeds.

Imam Ali (ع): Ruler and Statesman

Before Imam Ali (ع) took charge of the state, the condition of the country was in hopeless turmoil. All of the most important people and the companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) had lost sympathy with the government and were openly hostile to it. Rank, favoritism and the short-sighted greed of Marwan and his clan were responsible for this chaos. People were embolden to rise in arms against the mismanaged and malevolent rule. Their uprising had succeeded. They had lost all respect for authority and had no desire to see the ruling junta back in power again. On the other hand, the members of the overthrown regime had sinister designs to gain back the control which had benefitted them for so long, while some influential persons were hoping to gain the caliphate for themselves.

For three days after the murder of the caliph, there was anarchy in the capital and on the fifth day, Imam Ali (ع) was unanimously elected. He neither claimed nor contested for the temporal kingdom. It was forced upon him. But when he accepted it, in his first speech, he openly declared they had elected him as their temporal ruler and he would remain so as long as they kept on obeying him. He had grave doubts about the sincerity of their desire as twice, he had refused to accept their request to act as

their ruler. Yet, seeing their hopeless plight and their repeated solicitations moved him to assent to their entreaties; yet he was under no obligation to them for their election, on the contrary, he had done them a service by agreeing to rule over them. He knew well, the reasons of their persistent supplications for his rulership. They had been badly treated by the malevolent, cruel and oppressive regime and the ruling class had insulted them and had always refused to listen to their grievances or come to their relief. The masses had been kept under complete ignorance of the true teaching of Islam and were made to feel that such ignorance was the best thing for them. They had been made to concentrate on worldly benefits at the cost of religion and piety, the result being a rule of brutal force of which they were tired and wanted the kind of benign government which had been introduced by the Holy Prophet (ص). That desire had made them look for somebody who could reintroduce that type of government they realized that Imam Ali (ع) was the man in whom the Holy Prophet (ص) had confided and intrusted more than in anybody else and that he had been the trustee to every secret of the Holy Prophet (ص). Therefore, they unanimously elected him as their ruler.

Ironically, they had not realized the responsibilities and obligations under which they had brought themselves by making him their Amir (ruler). He knew their weaknesses and also knew that they would lose their confidence in him when they would find that he attached more importance to general welfare than to personal good, when he would make them follow the path laid down by the Holy Prophet (ص), when, with the introduction of equality and equity he would make them accept the principles of brotherhood of man and general amity towards their fellow beings and when he would try to lead them toward selfless discharge of duties as laid down by Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص), thus making them a model subject of the kingdom of Allah, a model to be adopted by those who desire peace and prosperity under a benign rule. He was afraid that with the introduction of such a revolutionary (Islamic) system of government and society, the uninitiated would rebellion against him, continuing to clamor for unwarranted and unreasonable personal benefits as usual and crave vicious pleasures that would no longer be possible in a fairness-to-all and a godly system of government which he had envisioned in Islam. Those who would rebellion did not realize that the previous, traditionally exploitive secular regimes, by allowing them cheap and simple pleasure, granting them limited power and keeping them in the darkness of ignorance their rulers, had actually turned them into automata to work for them as kinds of slaves deprived of vision and

foresight without hope for a good prospect of a future life. On the other hand, Imam Ali (ع) would try to make them follow the true part of religion at the behest of their own free will, make them develop the habit of simple living and high thinking and teach them to give up the desire of seeking undue favors and unjustifiable pleasures. That was the kind of men that Allah wanted them to be and the Holy Prophet (ص) had tried to model them into. The task had not been easy then and the lapse of a quarter century had made it even more difficult, but Imam Ali (ع) would try to achieve it, according to Al-Karrar of mawlana Riad Ali.

Whatever shadow of hope was lurking in the minds of persons expecting wealth, prosperity and governorship disappeared with this very first speech of Imam Ali (ع). They knew that they could not expect unholy and ungodly concessions from Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Their unreasonable claims on public wealth, their fiefs and their unjustifiable holdings of public property would not remain with them. The result was three rebellions against Imam Ali (ع) and a restless period of rulership for about four years.

His Reforms

But Ali (ع), with the sincerity of purpose, tried to do what he had promised and raise the mental uplift of the masses. The first thing was the consolidation of the state which he successfully carried out against very heavy odds. The second thing was to create a central bureau where he distributed the work of training the crude Arabs into educated and civilized people. To Abul-Aswad al-Du'ali [the renown poet], he dictated basic principles and rules of grammar for the Arabic language with special instruction to concentrate on the syntax of that language. Abdul-Rahman al-Salami was made to look after the are of reading the Holy Quran correctly. Kumail ibn Ziyad was made responsible for mathematics, engineering and astronomy, Umar ibn Sulma for the Arabic language and literature (prose), Abadah ibn al-Samit for poetry and logic, Abdullah ibn `Abbas for principles of administration and rhetoric and he himself, for philosophy of religion, ethics, commentary of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص). Actually, he was hub of the whole activity. Although every hour of his glorious life was filled, he still found time to teach his assistants, what to say, when and how to say it, what to teach and when and how to teach it. Long after his death, everyone of his above pupils proved a shining star in the sky of Muslim civilization and have been considered as Imams.

Introduction of New System of Government

The next subject which engaged his immediate attention was the improvement of administration. To make due arrangements for security of the state from external attacks, to preserve law and order, to control corruption and bribery, to provide equality of opportunities and equal distribution of public wealth among his subjects, to appoint honest and pious officers, to chastise and remove from service dishonest ones, to maintain a powerful army, to avoid enrollment of mere mercenaries in it, to take care of traders and traders and treat non-Muslims with deserving leniency and respect, were apparently the items of his program which he successfully carried out.

How He Organized Public Service Departments

He divided the state service into following sections:

1. Public finance
2. Army
3. Central administrative bureau
4. Judiciary,
5. Provincial offices

The department of Public Finance was divided into two sections:

a. Collection section and
b. Distribution sections.

The collection section was subdivided into three heads and only three kinds of taxes were allowed to be collected by Imam Ali (ع):

(i) Land Revenue: It was usually collected in coins of silver and gold or in bullion. Officers to collect this revenue were sometimes appointed by the center, but the Imam (ع) had also authorized the governors to appoint such officers themselves.

(ii) Zakat (poor rate) and sadaqa (poor fund): These were usually collected in kind or in live-stock. Officers to collect this revenue were always appointed directly by the Imam (ع) and he took great care to appoint honest and pious persons on these posts and to keep a sharp look out on their activities and behavior.

(iii) Jizya: This was a tax from non-Muslims in lieu of zakat, etc. And in return for the security and amenities provided to them. Collection of no other kind of tax, from non Muslims, was allowed by him.

Land surveys were carried out by him wherever necessary. Every taxpayer had the right to appeal and an appellate jurisdiction was brought into force. Officers for this court of appeal were directly appointed by the Imam (ع).

He was the first man to introduce a budgetary system for the collection of revenues and expenditure. Every province had to present its budget direct to him for approval. The incomes were divided into two heads; provincial and central. Zakat and sadaqa were items of the central revenues, land revenue and jiziya were provincial revenues.

The schedule of rate for land revenue was fixed by him as follows:

1. 1st Class (most fertile) land1.5 dirham per Jareeb
2. 2nd class fertile land1 dirham per Jareeb
3. 3rd Grade land.5 dirham per Jareeb
4. Vineyards and orchards10 dirhams per Jareeb
   and date palm groves

Note: 1 Jareeb equals 2268 3/4 sq. yd.

Sadaqa and zakat were the taxes [the first being optional] which only Muslims had to pay. It was a tax levied on personal income, landed property, hoarded bullion and currency and on livestock. Its rate was that which was fixed by tenets of the Muslim law.

Jizya was an annual, personal tax, collected per head of a person irrespective of his income or property. But such persons were divided into classes. The division of classes follows:

1st class: very rich persons and landlords: 48 dirhams per head
2nd class: middle class people: 42 dirhams per head
3rd class: businessmen: 42 dirhams per head
4th class: general public: 12 dirhams per head

There were positive orders that no jizya was to be collected from beggars or persons falling in following categories:

1. Those who were above 50 years of age
2. Those who were below 20 years of age
3. All women
4. All paralyzed persons
5. All disabled persons
6. All blind persons
7. All mentally disabled persons

Income from the source of zakat and sadaqa was reserved for the following heads:

A. Administration of the departments of collection and distribution.

B. Grants, donations and aids to poor, have-nots, orphans, aged widows and disabled persons.

C. Honorarium to volunteers who fought for the state.

D. Pensions to widows and orphans of soldiers and officers of the army.

E. To acquire and set free slaves from the bondage of slavery.

F. Reparation of government loans.

G. To help pilgrims whenever and wherever they were found stranded.

Items C to F were, for the first time, introduced by Imam Ali (ع) and as far as F was concerned, no king had ever thought his kingdom to be morally obliged to pay back a loan taken from somebody.

Imam Ali (ع) was the first man who declared that a ruler's share of income from the state was equal to that of any commoner.

Income from jizya was earmarked for the following items of expenditures:

(i) Maintenance of the army
(ii) Construction and maintenance of forts
(iii) Construction and maintenance of roads and bridges
(iv) Well sinking
(v) Construction of rest houses

Land revenue was the provincial income to be spent on maintenance of courts, offices and other necessary items as per orders of the center. Before I bring an end to the narration of his system of revenue collection, I must mention a remark passed by him in this respect to one

of his governors. He said, "As far as the collection of land revenue is concerned, you must always keep in view the welfare of the taxpayer which is primarily of more importance than the taxes themselves. And, the actual taxable capacity of the people rests on the fertility quotient of the land. More attention should, therefore, be paid to land fertility and the prosperity of the taxpayer than to the collection of revenues."

The distribution of public wealth was a subject on which Imam Ali (ع) spent much time and thought and, in return, caused him to lose many adherents and followers.

The first reform that Imam Ali (ع) introduced was to reorganize the treasury and the accounts department. Dishonest officers were removed from the service. A system of accounting was introduced. Othman ibn Hanif was appointed as the chief treasury officer. A principle of equal distribution of public money was introduced. For the first time, a system of weekly distribution was adopted. Every Thursday was the distribution day or pay day so that Muslims could spend their Friday holiday happily. Every Thursday the accounts were closed and every Saturday started with fresh books of accounts.

Impartiality and equity were the keynotes of Imam Ali's policy of distribution of wealth. At the Center (Kufa), he often supervised the distribution himself and after the work was over and the accounts cleared, he would say prayers in the treasury and thank his Master that he had performed his duty faithfully.

Imam Sha`bi says that as a young boy, once he passed the treasury at the time when Imam Ali (ع) was supervising the distribution. He saw African slaves standing in line with the Arab sheikhs and getting equal shares and within a short time the heaps of silver and gold coins disappeared, the treasury was cleared, Imam Ali (ع) said the prayers and left the office empty-handed. That day he had given his share to an old woman who complained that her share was not sufficing her (Kitab al-Gharat).

Once one of his most favorite and trustworthy companions, Othman ibn Hanif told him that by introduction of the principle of equal distribution of wealth and bringing important persons down to the level of commoners, by raising the status of Blacks and Persians to that of Arabs, by allotting shares to slaves equal to their masters, by depriving the rich persons of their worldly attachments and by stopping special grants

apportioned to them according to their status, he had done more harm to himself and his cause than good. Continuing he said, "Look my Master, these are the reasons why influential and rich Arabs are deserting you and are gathering around Mu`awiyah. Of what use are these poor persons, disabled people, aged widows and Black slaves to you. How can they help and serve you?" The Imam (ع) replied, "I cannot allow rich and influential persons to exploit the society of this Muslim state and to run an inequitable and unjust system of distribution of wealth and opportunities. I cannot for a moment tolerate this. This is public wealth, it comes from the masses it must go back to them. The rich and powerful persons have not created any wealth, they have merely sucked it from the masses and after paying the taxes, etc. what is left to them is many times more than what they pay to the state and they are welcome to retain it. Had all this been private property I would have gladly distributed it in the same manner. As far as their desertion is concerned, I am glad they have deserted me. As far as the usefulness or services of these disabled persons and have-nots is concerned, remember that I am not helping them to secure their services, I fully well know they are unable to serve me. I help them because they cannot help themselves and they are as much human beings as you and I. May Allah help me to do my duty as He wishes me to do" (Kitab al-Gharat).

The Army

Imam Ali (ع) was a born soldier and had started his military career at the age of fourteen when he acted as a bodyguard to the Holy Prophet (ص). From that time onward, he was the only military talent on whom the Holy Prophet (ص) would rely and all arrangements for organization of defenses and maintenance of an army of volunteers or soldiers were totally entrusted to him by the Holy Prophet (ص). It was his ability and valor which brought such success to Islam in its early stage against such enormous odds. Even `Umar was taking his advice on military problems (Al-Sirajul-Mubin, Al-Murtada and Kitab al-Gharat).

Time had not dimmed his valor or his ability to organize such an important section of the state. At the age of sixty, in the battlefields of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan, he was as brave a soldier, as good a leader and as keen a marshal as he was in the prime of his life in the battlefields of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar and Hunain.

During his short period of rulership of about four years, he organized this department very carefully.

The first liability on the state exchequer was the army department. Every governor of the province, besides being chief finance officer of the province, was the commander of the army placed under him. When officers could not be found to look after themilitary as well as civil administration, then the functions were divided.

Imam Ali (ع) did not tolerate mere mercenaries but did not let services of volunteers go unpaid. He hated murder and bloodshed and desired his soldiers to be soldiers in the service of Allah and religion. His strict orders to the army were, Always keep fear of Allah in your mind, remember that you cannot afford to do without His Grace. Remember that Islam is a mission of peace and love. Keep the Holy Prophet (ص) before you as a model of bravery, valor and piety. Do not kill anybody unless in self-defense. Take care of your mounts and your arms, they are your best guards. Work hard while you are at it then devote some time to rest and relaxation. Rest and relaxation are as necessary for you as hard work. Do not let one overstep the time limit of the other. Do not pursue those who run away from an encounter and do not kill fleeing persons. Do not kill those who beg for life and mercy. Do not kill civilians. Do not outrage the modesty of women. Do not harm old people and children. Do not accept any gifts from the civil population of any place. Do not lodge your soldiers or officers in the houses of civilians. Do not forget to say your daily prayers. Fear Allah. Remember that death will inevitably come to everyone of you some time or other, even if you are thousand of miles away from a battlefield, therefore, be always ready to face death. He did not appreciate heavily armed and clad soldiers. He liked lighter swords, lighter bows and arrows, lighter coats of arms and lighter chains of armor. He preferred to have an agile and a noble army. I wish I had space at my disposal to translate parts from the books Al-Gharat, Al-Sir aj al-Mubin, Al-Murtada and Kitab al-Siffin (as quoted by ibn Abul-Hadid). They have discussed and narrated at some length his system of reorganizing the army, his principles of strategy and his tactics of war: how he divided the army into six units, beginning from the vanguard and ending it at the rear guards (Rawdah and Saqqah); how he arranged to cover every possibility of a retreat with the help of these units; how he sub-divided the cavalry into horse and camel units, and infantry into archers, swordsmen and Mata'een (soldiers armed with short lances which they throw with precision, skill and force); how he made the vanguard responsible for scouting, pioneering and performing duties of army engineers and miners;

how he used to arrange the army in a battlefield; how he never suffered a defeat in his life; how bold he was; how he used to fight without protecting his body with armor or shield; how he never delivered more than one blow (mostly his one blow was sufficient to kill his opponent, if not he would give the opponent a chance to get up and run away) and how nobody ever dared stand before him for his second blow. To him war was a pious duty to be performed only for the purpose of defense. He often declared, "Muslim's life is a battlefield, where he is seldom required to defend his self or his cause and country at the point of sword, which is Jehad al-Asghar (holy war on a minor scale), however formidable be the forces he is to face, while in every day of his life he is to fight against evil desires, vicious cravings and inordinate wishes, which is al-jhad al-akbar (a holy war on a major scale), take care and do not suffer a defeat in this battle; remember it is life-long struggle; a success here will be honored with martyrdom, even if one dies in his bed surrounded by his relatives."

Judicial Procedure

The principle of keeping independent of and over and above the executive, administrative and military sections of the state was the main factor of the reforms introduced by Imam Ali (ع). He was very particular about this, so much so that historians narrate that once he appeared before his Chief Justice (Judge Shuraih) as a complainant and the Chief Justice wanted to give him a place of honor in the court and to treat him like a king or caliph. He reproached the judge for such a behavior, saying that he was there as plaintiff and not as a king or a caliph then he cheerfully accepted the decision of the court against him. The effect of upholding the prestige of the court of justice and his adherence to the principles of equality and equity were so impressive that the person, against whom he had filed the case and had lost it, ran after him, kissed the hem of his garment and said, "Master! Teach me Islam, I am a Christian and I want to convert to Islam." Why?," inquired Imam Ali (ع), "Did anyone force you to do that?" "No, Master," the Christian said, "But your behavior of treating even a non-Muslim subject as your equal, the prestige which you have granted to justice and fair play and your abstention from use of power and authority made me feel that Islam is indeed a great religion. You are a ruler and a caliph, you could have easily ordered me to be killed and my property looted and nobody dare ask reasons of your actions, but you took the case against me to the court and cheerfully accepted the decision against you; I have never heard of such a ruler before you. What is more, what you claimed as yours is actually yours and not mine, but I know the persons who could provide proof of this are

out of Kufa, therefore, I boldly said that it was mine and not yours. That was a lie and now I am ashamed to feel that I lied against such an honorable person. You have heard me. Will you not allow me to enter the fold of Islam?" The Imam (ع) againt inquired: "Are you, of your own free-will, entering our fold?" "Yes," the Christian replied. "Under your regime," he went on, "I have nothing to lose by remaining in my religion and no worldly benefit to gain by embracing Islam and by confessing my guilt and sin."

The code which he laid down for selection and enrollment of judges shows he took care of even minute requirements of the post and status. It says,

1. Only such persons should be selected who are well versed in Muslim law and know enough of the Holy Book and traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) to decide according to the principles laid down the rein. Besides, they must have knowledge of personal laws of other religions followed in their provinces.

2. They must be men of some standing and status.

3. They must not lose their tempers or patience and treat litigants harshly and insultingly. The litigants must feel that their interests are well-guarded and well looked after and that the doors of justice are always open to them.

4. If they feel that they have made a mistake, they should not obstinately stick to it, but try to undo the injustice done by them.

5. They should be able to probe deeply before them and to reach the truth.

6. They must be able to reach decisions quickly and must not unnecessarily prolong a case.

7. They must not accept recommendations and must not be influenced.

8. Their salaries should be fixed so that they are not tempted by bribes and gifts.

9. In audiences and levees of the governors they should be given seats of honor.

10. Greedy and various persons and those who are open to flattery and cajolery should also be avoided.

11. The door of appeal to the public should not be closed. The caliph should always hear appeals against the decisions of the courts and should decide as per orders of Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص).

Central and Provincial Secretariat and Subordinate Offices

The Imam (ع) has laid down a code for the officers of the State which covers every aspect of their duties and obligations. It is embodied in the form of a letter (Letter No. 53, Nahjul-Balagha) written to one of his governors. Abdul-Masih al-Antaki, the famous Christian jurist, poet and philosopher of Beirut who died in the beginning of the 20th century says, "It is by far a superior and better code than the ones handed down by Moses and Hammurabi. It explains what a humane administration should be like and how it is to be carried on and it justifies the claims of Muslims that Islam wants to introduce a godly administration of the people, by the people and for the people. It decrees that a ruler should not rule to please himself but to bring happiness to the ruled. No religion before Islam tried to achieve this end. Ali (ع) must be congratulated for having introduced these principles in his government and for having written them down for posterity.

I quote here just a few points to illustrate what Abdul-Masih meant by saying that it was a better code than the codes handed down by Moses or Hammurabi.

(1) You must create in your mind kindness and love for your subjects. Do not behave with them as though you are a voracious and ravenous beast and that your success lies in tearing them up and devouring them.

(2) Muslims and non-Muslims should be treated alike. Muslims are your brothers and non-Muslims are human beings just like you.

(3) Do not feel ashamed to forgive. Do not hurry over punishments. Do not quickly lose your temper over mistakes and failures

of those over whom you rule. Anger and desire of vengeance are not going to be much use to you in your administration.

(4) Do not allow the (evil) force of favoritism and nepotism to violate your duties to Allah and to man and drive you towards tyranny and oppression.

(5) While selecting officers take care that you do not select such people who have served tyrannous and oppressive rulers and have been responsible for atrocities and savage cruelties committed by the state.

(6) Select honest and kind persons and, from among them, prefer those who speak out the bitter truth to you unreservedly without fear or favor.

(7) Appointments in the first place must be on probation.

(8) Keep your officers well paid so that they may not be tempted to corruption or misappropriation.

(9) Appoint confidential officers to secretly watch the activities of your officers and staff and report to you about their behaviors.

(10) the secretaries of your civil, judicial or military services should be of personage naturally richer in character than the average. Choose the best amongt them irrespective of age or period of service.

(11) All letters or applications should be dealt with by the officers and replies or orders about them should be drafted by them only, no subordinate must be allowed to work as the eyes and minds of these officers.

(12) Take your subjects into your confidence and make them feel that you are their wellwisher and friend.

(13) Never break a promise or go against the terms of a treaty. It is a sin against Allah.

(14) You must take care of your traders but should never allow them to resort to hoarding, black-marketing and profiteering.

(15) Promote and encourage local arts and crafts, it reduces poverty and raises the standard of life.

(16) Farm tillers are assets to the state and should be protected as an asset.

(17) Remember that your sacred duty is to look after the poor, disabled and orphans. Let not your officers humiliate them, ill-treat them or oppress them. Help them, protect them and let them approach you whenever they are in need of your help.

(18) Avoid bloodshed. Do not kill anybody unless he deserves to be killed according to the canons of Islam.

Ali (ع) and the Philosophy of Religions

A man enters a garden laid out into beautiful flower beds, artistically and aesthetically arranged. The flowers have been grown by those persons who know the are and science of it. The beauty of their colors and the delicacy of their forms and shades are pleasing to the eyes and their fragrance enchants the minds. The man knows that he has not the knowledge and capability to cultivate and grow flowers like that and the public has no time to go through the garden and enjoy the sights and fragrance of these beds at leisure. He picks up a few flowers from each of these beds and arranges them in a bouquet as a humble homage to the grandness and beauty of the garden.

With this view in mind, these chapters were written. I have drawn freely from the following books Al-Murtada, al-Karrar, Al-Sirajul-Mubin. Tahtheebul-Matin, Nafs al-Rasul, the Spirit of Islam, Islam Under the Arabs, the preaching of Islam, Khasa'is al-Nisa'i, al-Tabrisi's Ihtijaj, Bihar al-Anwar, Al-Manaqib, Sharh of Ibn Maisum, Sharh of Mirza Fathallah, the Sharh of Ibn Abul-Hadid and Irshad.

I am sure the selection is not the best, but it is the best that I can do and I am sure it will provoke minds superior to mine for better efforts.

In this last chapter, I shall try to discuss the teachings of the Imam (ع) in the field of philosophy of religion.

With Imam Ali (ع) and the Imams of his descent, religion was a vital and positive force of life. Their philosophy never sinks to a war of words without life and without earnestness which is the main feature of the schools under Ptolemies or the vicious circles created by the

philosophers of the West and East. Their ardent love of knowledge, devotion in the evolution of the human mind, their sincere faith in Allah and His Mercy, Love and Kindness and their looking upwards for the literalness of common interpretations of law, show the spirituality and expansiveness of their philosophy of religion. The Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (ص) defines knowledge by saying, "Enlightenment of the heart is its essence, Truth is its principal object, Inspiration is its guide, Reason is its acceptor, Allah is its Inspirer and the words of man are those who utter them. To him, the evolution of the mind was the essence of life and religion was the essence of the evolution of the mind.

How correctly Imam Ali (ع) taught us that a man without a mind is not a man and a mind without religion is worse even than the instinctual nature of a beast, more harmful, more dangerous and more carnivorous. Devotion without understanding will not bring the Blessing of Allah, it is useless.

He attaches so much value to the mind and its correct ways of grasping the truth that he says your first leader and guide is your mind. At other places he says that nothing is more useful to man than his intelligence, there is nothing wealthier than wisdom, there is no greater bounty of the master than the intellect granted to you, you can dispense with everything but your mind and intelligence, there is no better guide towards truth than wisdom, one hour of deep and sober meditation is better than a life of prayers without understanding and a wise man thinks first and speaks or acts afterwards.

Next to intelligence and wisdom, he taught us to attach importance to the sincerity of purpose in life. Once explaining a certain verse to Abdullah ibn Abbas, he said, "Ibn Abbas, if you sincerely and intelligently go in search of truth or religion and if you wander out of the right path, even then there is a reward for you." There is a sermon in Nahjul-Balagha in which he says, "Do not kill the Kharijites after me because to go in search of the truth and to lose the true path is better than to spend the entire span of one's life in pursuit of vicious pleasure and wickedness."

The natural and logical sequence of the above two attributes is to take account of yourself, your knowledge, your thoughts, your intentions, your desires and your deeds. He, therefore, advises us thus: "Weigh your own souls before the time of weighing of your actions arrives. Take

account of yourself before you are called upon to account for your conduct in this existence."

To obtain favorable results of such weighing and taking account of oneself, one must have done good deeds. And as far as actions and reactions are concerned, he wants us to understand that human conduct is not fortuitous, one act is the result of another; life, destiny and character means a series of incidents, events and actions which are related to each other, as cause and effect by an ordained Law. Therefore, apply yourself to good and pure actions, adhere to truth, follow the true path to salvation, before death makes you leave this abode. If you do not warn and guide yourself none other can direct you. The master has pointed out to you the path of salvation and has warned you of the temptations of this world. Abstain from foulness though it may be fair to your sight. Avoid evil, however pleasant, for you know not how far it can take you away from him.

His discourses in Nahjul-Balagha about noble deeds are supreme reading. His warnings against sinful life are very persuasive teachings. He says, "O You servants of the Lord! Fulfil the duties that are imposed on you for in their neglect there is abasement, your good work alone will render easy the road to death and to the Heaven. Remember each sin increases the debt and makes the chain heavier. The message of mercy has come, the path of truth (haqq) is clear; obey the command that has been laid on you; live in purity and work with nobility of purpose and ask Allah to help you in your endeavors and to forgive your past transgressions. Cultivate humility and forbearance, comfort yourself with the sincere truth."

Next to sincere faith in the Unity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (ص), he lays a great emphasis on piety. He wants us to realize that piety is not a juicy morsel to be swallowed easily nor is it dip in the river to clean all dirt and filth from the body. Piety means those actions, which at the beginning may be sour, harsh and painful to perform. Piety means to free oneself from vicious desires and wicked deeds. This freedom cannot be obtained but by constant effort and endeavor. Such efforts are a continuous struggle and a long drawn war against the vicious cravings of the mind. Nobody can be free from vices and sins unless he or she develops the capacity to abhor and hate them. When once this capacity develops, then to adopt a pious and sober life because a habit, a second nature. Few things are forbidden to you and so many things are allowed that no one is barred from normal relaxation, ease and comfort from sober and harmless pleasures and pursuits.

To him, asceticism was a sin against the self. History cites many instances where he admonished the persons who had given up their homes and families, had severed every connection with society, had taken to a mosque and had been praying, fasting and reciting the Holy Book morning, noon and night. He sent them back to their homes and told them that their duties lie among their fellow beings and what they had done was not piety but fanatic asceticism which is not allowed in Islam. He strongly reprobated observance of asceticism and condemned the abandonment of the affairs of this life in fanatic pursuits of rituals.

He says that he who acts with piety gives rest to his soul; he who takes warning understands the truth and he who understands it attains the perfect knowledge.

His teachings do not convey any impression of predestination; on the contrary they portray a soul animated with a living faith in Allah and yet full of trust in human development founded on individual exertion springing from human volition. One day, someone asked him the meaning of Qaza' and Qadar. He replied, "Qaza' means obedience to the commandments of Allah and avoidance of sin and qadar means the ability to live a pious and holy life, to do that which brings one nearer to Allah and to shun that which throws him away from His Perfection. Say not that man is compelled, for that attribution is tyranny against Allah, nor say that man has the absolute discretion to decide what is right and what is wrong, we achieve success through His Help and Grace in our endeavors, to act righteously and we transgress because of our neglect of His Commandments."

Explaining the meaning of the verse, "There is no power nor help but from Allah," he said, "It means that I am not afraid of Allah's Wrath, but I am afraid of His Purity, nor have I power to observe His Commandments, but my strength is in His assistance. Allah has placed us on earth to try each of us according to his endowments." Explaining the verse saying, "We will try you to see who are strivers (after truth and purity) and who are forbearing and patient and we will test your actions and we will help you by degrees to attain what you know not!," he says, "These verses prove the liberty of human volition." Explaining the verse: "Allah directs him whom He chooses and leads him astray whom He chooses," he says, "This does not means that He compels men to evil or good deeds, or that He either gives direction or refuses it according to His caprice, for this would do away all responsibility for human action; on the

contrary it means that Allah points out the road to truth and lets men choose as they will."

In a sermon in Nahjul-Balagha, Imam Ali (ع) says, "The theory of compulsion, predestination or predetermination of fate is a Satanic insinuation and a doctrine of faith among the enemies of Allah. On the contrary, Allah has ordained man to obey His Commands and has given him freedom of will and action, he is at full liberty to obey His Commands or to disobey. There is no compulsion in accepting the religions preached by His Messengers and no compulsion to obey His Commands. Even His Commands (like daily prayers, fasting, zakat, etc.) are not hard, harsh and unbearable and every leniency and case on account of age and health is granted to man."

The freedom of human will, based on the doctrine that man would be judged by the use he had made of his reason, was inculcated in the teachings of the Holy Prophet (ص), along with an earnest belief in the Supreme Power ruling the universe. Imam Ali (ع) gave this idea a more definite form and it grew into a philosophy. In reply to a question he says, "Perhaps you consider predestination to be necessary and the particular decree to be irreversible; if it were so then reward and punishment would be in vain and the promise and the threat would be of no account, and surely blame would not have come from Allah for the sinner nor praise for the righteous, nor would the righteous be more worthy of the reward of his good deeds, nor the wicked be more deserving of the punishment of his sin than the righteous. Allah has ordained the giving of choice to man and the putting of them in fear and He hath not laid duties upon men by force nor sent his prophets as farce." When asked, "What is predestination and the particular decree which drove us? He answered, "The command of Allah and the rein His purpose." Then he repeated the verse, "The Lord has ordained that you must worship none but Him and to be kind to your parents."

Morality of life is another point which Imam Ali (ع) wanted men to realize fully, sincerely and rationally. He wants us to understand that death is a biological incident of all forms of life and it is unavoidable, inevitable and sudden. No one knows when and how he or she is going to cross this barrier., therefore, it is foolish to imagine that it can be avoided, sinful self deception to forget it and idiotically timid to be afraid of it. He says, "I am as fond of death as a baby is fond of his mother's breast. The natural sequence of the mortality of life is that everything connected with it and with this world is mundane and has no lasting value. Therefore,

why concentrate on pleasure and take to vicious ways to acquire them, why not try to improve your lot in the hereafter?"

Imam Ali's teachings are a true gospel of the work ethic. He wants man to work, to work honestly, sincerely and diligently and to work for the reward reserved in the Heaven. He says, "Work, work and do good work while you still have life, health and opportunities. Allah ordains you to work while there is still time to work. Be thankful for the time and opportunities allotted to you and work for the good of mankind and for your own good. A life without work is a life without worth. A mind without sober thoughts and a life without a program of honest work is the most fertile soil for the seeds of wickedness and vice. Work, with the nobility of purpose is one of the forms of prayer." His advice to his son was, "Exert yourself to earn an honest living. The worst form of folly is the wasting of opportunities. Opportunities do not repeat themselves so make use of each of them when it presents itself, but let piety guide in all of your actions."

Thus, Imam Ali (ع) guides us through the problems of men with respect to ourselves individually as he leads us towards solving problems encountered with one another. In a letter to Imam Hassan (ص), he says, "My dear son, as far as your behavior with other human beings is concerned let yourself act as scales to help you judge its goodness or wickedness. Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you. Whatever you dislike to happen to you, spare others from such happenings." At another place, he advises, "Do not make yourself a slave of anything. Allah has created you a free man. Do not sell away this freedom in return for anything. There is no real value or benefit that you derive by selling your honor, conscience and self respect. Do not run after him who tries to avoid you. Remember that to oppress a weak or helpless person is the worst form of tyranny. Do good to your brother when he is bent upon doing harm to you. Befriend him when he ignores you. Be generous to him if he is miserly to you. Be kind to him if he is harsh and cruel to you. But be very careful that you do not behave with undeserving, mean and wicked persons."

Imam Ali (ع) had a very soft corner in his noble heart for the poor, the disabled, the aged and the orphans. To Malik he says, "I want to caution you about the poor. Fear Allah about your attitude towards them. Let it be remembered that their welfare is the first charge to a state and on the well-to-do people."

As far as the question of man and Allah is concerned, Imam Ali (ع) teaches us to believe in Allah Who has created us, Who loves us, nourishes us, helps us and is our well-wisher. He should be loved, adored and venerated.

Through many of his prayers Imam Ali (ع) has implanted in the minds of those who have faith in Allah the highest devotional spirit. He teaches us to love and adore Him and to think of Him as the Lord, the Adorable, the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Cherisher, the True Sovereign, Whose Mercy and Grace overshadows the universe. Who is the master, the Loving and Forgiving, Who bestows power and might on whom He pleases. None can lower him whom He exalted. Whose beneficence is all persuading. Whose Forgiveness and Mercy is all embracing. Who is the Helper of the afflicted, the reliever of all distressed, the Consoler of the broken hearts. Who is present everywhere to help His Creatures. Who fulfills all needs, bestows all blessings. Who is a friend of the poor and the bereaved. At another place he beseeches the master thus, "You are my Fortress; a Castle for all who seek Your Protection and Help. The Helper of the pure and true, the refugee of the weak. The Helper of those seeking Your Help. Thanks be to You, O Lord Whose Mercy extends to every sinner and who provides for even those who deny Him."

This is how he wants us to have faith in Allah, a Creator, a Nourisher, a Helper, a Refuge, a Protection. One who loves you and One to be loved, adored, venerated and worshipped.

The other aspect of his teaching is that he has clearly and emphatically condemned all anthropomorphic (to attribute human forms, qualities or personality to Allah) and anthropathy (ascription of human passions and affections to Allah) concepts. He says, "Allah is not like any object that the human mind can conceive. No attribute can be ascribed to Him which bears the least resemblance to any qualities which human beings have perceived of from their knowledge of material objects. The perfection of piety consists in knowing Allah; the perfection of knowledge is the affirmation of His Verity, and the perfection of verity is the acknowledgment of His Unity in all sincerity, and the perfection of sincerity is to deny all attributes to the Deity. He, who refers an attribute to Allah believes the attributes to be Allah and he who so believes an attribute to be Allah, regards Allah as two or part of one. He who asks where Allah is assimilates him with some object. Allah is the Creator, not because He Himself is created. Allah is Existent not because he was non-existent. He is with every object, not from resemblance or nearness. He is

outside everything not from separation or indifference towards His creatures. He works and creates not in the meaning of motions or actions. He sees and hears but not with help of bodily organs or outside agencies. He was seeing when there was nothing created to see. He has no relationship to matter, time and space, Allah is Omniscient because knowledge is His Essence, Loving because Love is His Essence, Mighty because Power is His Essence, Forgiving because Forgiveness is His Essence and not because these are attributes apart from His Essence."

At another place he says, "O Lord! You are the Creator, I am the created; You are the Sovereign, I am only Your servant; I am the one who beseeches, You, Lord are the refuge. You are the Forgiver, I am the sinner; You my Lord, are the Merciful, the all-Knowing, the all-Loving; I am groping in the dark; I seek Your knowledge and Love. Bestow, Lord, all Your Knowledge, Love and Mercy upon me and let me approach You, my Lord. You live in every heart and every soul. Your Knowledge is ingrained in every mind."

Compiler and Commentators of Nahjul-Balagha

The last compiler of the sermons, letters, orders and sayings of Imam Ali (ع) was Sayyid al-Sharif ar-Radi. His was the compilation which came down to us in its entire form through ten centuries. He named this compilation Nahjul-Balagha.

Sayyid ar-Radi's name was Abul-Hassan Sayyid Muhammad ar-Radi. Al-Radi was his nicknamed, laqab. He was born in Baghdad (in 359 A.H.) in a family famous all over the country for its connections with the state, patronage of arts and literature and interest in history, philosophy and religion. It was a time when Baghdad was vying with Cairo and Cordoba for superiority over arts, sciences, philosophy and languages.

His father, "Abu Ahmed" Sayyid Hussain, was appointed five times as a naqeeb or chief of the Family of Imam Ali (ع). His family was held in the highest regards by `Abbaside caliphs and Alawide kings.

Sayyid ar-Radi's father was a descendant of the Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) being the great grandson of the Imam (ع). His mother was the great granddaughter of the Imam Zainul-Abidin (ع). She was a woman famous for her piety and her literary talents.

His elder brother, Sayyid Murtada, was a great theologian and poet. Sayyid Murtada's work (poems) are still being published in Cairo and Beirut and form part of the course of Arabic literature in the universities of those two cities. Sayyid Murtada has a great place among the Shi`a theologians and is nicknamed A`lamul-huda (standards of the true path of religion).

His mother took a keen interest in educating her two sons, Sayyid Murtada and Sayyid ar-Radi. She personally took them both to the Shi`a theologian and mujtahid, Abu Abdullah Shaikh al-Mufid and requested him to educate these children under his personal supervision and care.

Sayyid ar-Radi, under the instructions of Shaikh al-Mufid, received an early education in Arabic grammar, literature and lexicology from Hussan ibn Abdullah Sairafi. At the early stage of ten he was considered a finished product of that institution and a good poet. He joined the educational institutions of Aby Ishaq-Ahmed ibn Muhammad-Tabari, Ali ibn Isa Rubace, Othman ibn Jinny and Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Musa Khawarizmi; with them he studied the Holy Quran, traditions, theology, history of religions, philosophy and literature. Since early childhood, his keen desire of acquiring knowledge and concentrating on studies was noted and appreciated by everyone of those great scholars under whom he received his training. As a matter of fact, he was considered as a prodigy by many of them.

At the age of twenty, his merit was recognized and respected by all of them and even Shaikh al-Mufid regarded this young man as his equal.

Sayyid ar-Radi died young at the age of forty-five or forty-seven years, but during this short period he had written many books. His commentary of the Holy Quran is considered by the historian Ibn Khallikan to be peerless and his explanation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) is still respected as a great resource of the meaning of the words used by the Holy Messenger of Allah.

At the age of twenty-one, he was elected in place of his father as naqeeb of the family of Abu Talib and was appointed by the State as the amir of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

He was a man of strong character, free will and independent views. During his time the Abbaside caliphate of Baghdad was at war with the Fatimide caliphate of Egypt, and had persuaded Sunni and Shi`a

dignitaries to sign a mahzar (public declaration) exposing the non-Muslims tendencies and activities of some Fatimide caliphs. Even the elder brother of Sayyid ar-Radi and his father were forced to sign it, but Sayyid ar-Radi refused to sign such a decree. This brought him onto a blacklist of the government, but he cheerfully accepted the loss of political privilege and status. Four times during his life did he refuse financial aid from the government.

In his early agem he had come across sayings, sermons and letters of Imam Ali (ع). He had found them scattered in various books of philosophy, religion, history, biography, literature and commentaries of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص). He had also found that the collections of Imam Ali's work as carried on by great scholars of the first four centuries because of the unsettled political condition of the centers of learning in the peninsula, were lost. He, therefore, decided to re-collect them once again. The desire became a passion with him. He toured all over the peninsula to collect these sermons, sayings and letters, gathering all the various books containing them and classified them into sermons, letters and sayings. The letters also included orders of Imam Ali (ع) to his officers and two of his wills. In fact, the classification was on the basis of what Imam Ali (ع) preached, what he wrote and what he said. Some biographers say that for years he devoted eighteen hours a day for this work. It was a labor of love for him. His health was failing yet he continued the work without an abatement of intensity.

To him this compilation was a sacred duty and he carried it out with the devotion and diligence that it deserved. He was particularly and sincerely careful not to add and not to subtract a word from the texts which he found. If he found a sermon divided into many parts he did not join them into a continuous whole but let them remain as two, three or four disjointed parts. This system of compilation annoyed the later commentators of Nahjul-Balagha, like ibn Abul-Hadid and ibn Maisum and they have complained about it. Sometimes, when Sayyid ar-Radi found the middle part of a sermon missing, he kept the two remaining parts as two separate sermons.

He collected from a pile of books and manuscripts on various subjects and had come across those books at various periods of his work. Naturally, there was not any chronological order in his collection. The sermons which are supposed to be delivered in Medina or in the early period of Imam Ali's temporal rulership are found in the later part of the

book and sermons on the events of Siffin and Nahrawan in early part. Similarly, the sermon, which is considered as the last sermon of Imam Ali (ع), precedes many discourses which by their test, may rightly be considered to be delivered in Medina during the periods of the first and second caliphate. At places we find that the Sayyid had copied the same sermon in different places as quoted by different authors. All these discrepancies jar upon the readers' minds. But they stand as iron clad irrefutable proof to the honest and sincere desire of Sayyid ar-Radi to present the work as he found it and not to interfere with it in any way however essential it might be.

Some historians and biographists are of the opinion that Sayyid ar-Radi was helped in this work by his elder brother Sayyid Murtada. But, had this been a fact, thenoble-minded Sayyid would have willingly mentioned it in his preface because he has tried to mention all the sources from which he found these sermons etc.

Sayyid ar-Radi died in the month of Muharram 404 A.H. at the age of 45 years. Some biographists are of the opinion that the year of his death was 406 A.H. And his age at the time of death was 47 years. His elder brother Sayyid Murtada and his teacher Shaikh al-Mufid were so grievously stricken that they could not lead the funeral service of that great man and the service was led by the Prime Minister "Abu Ghalib" Fakhrul Mulk.

Sayyid ar-Radi has left about 40 books as his memorial, some of them are great works, they consist of commentaries of the Holy Quran on religion and philosophy, yet his masterpiece was the collection of the sermons, letters and sayings of Imam Ali (ع).

As soon as the noble Sayyid compiled this book (Nahjul-Balagha), his contemporaries started writing commentaries on it. The work of commenting on the text and explaining the meanings of the words used by Imam Ali (ع), and the historical events mentioned therein, is still going on even nowadays. I am citing herein the names of some of the famous commentators of Nahjul-Balagha:

Sunni Commentators:

1. Imam Ahmed ibn Muhammad al-Wayri (cir. 470 A.H.)

2. Abul-Hassan Ali ibn Abul-Qasim al-Bayhaqi (565 A.H.). His commentary is quoted by Mu'jam al-Udaba' of Yaqut al-Hamawi, Vol. 13, p. 225, printed in Egypt.
3. Imam Fakhrud-Din al-Razi (606 A.H.). His commentary is quoted by:
   (i) Akhbarul-Hukama' of Ibn al-Qufti, p. 192, printed in Egypt.
   (ii) Uyun al-Anbiya' of Ibn Abu Sabee'a, p. 25, printed in Egypt.
4. Abdul-Hamid Hibathullah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite scholar (known as Ibn Abul-Hadid, 655 A.H.). His commentary is a world-famous classic covering 17 volumes, printed half a dozen times in Cairo, Beirut, Tehran and Isfahan.
5. Shaikh Kamalud-Din Abdul Rahman al-Shaybani (cir. 705 A.H.)
6. Allama Sa`dud-Din al-Taftazani (797 A.H.)
7. The Judge of Baghdad, Shaikh Qa'imud-Din.
8. Allama Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh (1323 A.H.) His commentary has been printed quite often and forms a part of the university course in Cairo and Beirut.
9. Professor Muhammad Hassan al-Nayer al-Mursafi of Egypt. His commentary is printed at Darul-Epistle Press Cairo, Egypt.
10. Professor Muhammad Mohiuddin Abdul Hamid, Professor of Lexicology of Al-Azhar University. His book was printed at Istiqamatul-Misr Press, Cairo.
11. Professor Shaikh Abdullah al-Bayruni of Cairo, Egypt.

Shi`a Commentators:

1. Allama Sayyid Ali ibn Nasir (d. cir. 450 A.H.). He was a contemporary of Sayyid ar-Radi.
2. The famous Shi`a mujtahid, theologian and philosopher Allama Qutubud-Din al-Ravandi. His Commentary is named Minhajul-Bara'a.
   3. Fazil al-Jalil, Allama Sayyid Ibn Tawus.
4. Allama ibn Maisum al-Bahrani (d. cir. 660 A.H.). He was a contemporary of Ibn Abul-Hadid. His commentary is famous and is considered of immense value on problems of the philosophy of Islam. He has not devoted as much time towards the literary and historical aspects of Nahjul-Balagha as ibn Abul-Hadid. His book is greatly valued by Shi`a theologians and philosophers.
5. Allama Qutubud-Din Muhammad ibn Hussain al-Iskandari. His commentary is named Al-Islah.
6. Shaikh Hussain ibn Shaikh Shihabud-Din Hayder Ali al-Amili al-Karki. He died in Hyderabad, India, in 1076 A.H.

7. Shaikh Nizamud-Din Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Nizamud-Din al-Jilani. He named his commentary Anwarul-Fasaha and Asrarul-Balagha.
8. Allama Sayyid Sanad Mirza Allauddin Muhammad ibn Abu Turab, known as Fazil al-Gulistanah (1110 A.H.). His commentary covers 20 volumes.
9. Agha Shaikh Muhammad Raza. His commentary is called Ba'dra al-Najafia. It has been printed often and very well received throughout Iran.
10. Allama Sayyid Ma'jid ibn Muhammad Bahrani. He was a contemporary of Shaikh al-Baha'i and died in 1028 A.H. His commentary is greatly valued by Shi`a theologians.
11. Mullah Fathallah Kashani. He died in 997 A.H. He was a lexicographer, grammarian, mathematician, physicist, engineer and theologian. He had been to the court of Akbar also. He was a contemporary of the famous historian of Akbar's court,
12. Mullah Abdul-Qadir Badayuni. The mullah speaks very highly of him in his book Muntakhabul-Tawarikh. He says, "Adil Khan, governor of Deccan, Khan al-Khanan and Hakeem Abul-Fath of the court of Akbar, paid great respects to him and Akbar also had great regards for him. His commentary is printed very often and so far as the translation of words used by Imam Ali (ع) in Persian is concerned, it is the best book ever published.

By the compiler of Nahjul-Balagha, Allama ash-Sharif ar-Radi

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

All Praise is due to Allah Who has held praise as the price of His bounties, protection against His retribution, pathway to His paradise and means for multiplication of His good treatment. May blessings be on His Messenger, the Prophet (ص) of mercy, the torch of the people, the chosen one from the origin of greatness and family of longstanding honors, the plantation of all-engrossing glory and the branch of sublimity full of fruits and foliage. And, may blessing be upon the members of his family who are lanterns against darkness, protection of the people, brilliant minarets of religion and high standards of greatness. May Allah shower upon them all the blessings befitting their distinction as rewards for their actions and suitable to the chastity of their lineage so long as the morning dawns and the stars twinkle.

In my early age at the dawn of youth, I commenced writing a book on the characteristics of the Imams covering the account of their virtues and masterpieces of their utterances. The purpose of the compilation was stated in the beginning of the book. The rein, I completed the portion relevant to the account of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع) but I could not complete that part concerning the other Imams due to impediments of the time and obstacles of the days. I divided the book into several chapters and sections, in a manner for its last section to compromise whatever had been related to Ali's short utterances such as his counsel, maxims and proverbs but not his long lectures and detailed discourses.

A number of my friends and brothers-in-faith, while wondering at its delicate and blossoming expressions, admired the contents of this particular section and desired that I complete a book which should cover all the forms of the utterances of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), including diverse materials such as lectures, letters, counsels, ethics, etc. They were convinced that because Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was the fountain of eloquence and the source of rhetoric, the entire proceedings would comprise wonders and surprises of eloquence and rhetoric, brilliant jewels of the Arabic language and shining expressions about faith that were not

collected nor found together in any other book. Through the Imam, the hidden delicacies of eloquence and rhetoric came to light and from him, its principles and rules were learned. Every speaker and orator had to tread on his footprints and every eloquent preacher availed of his utterances.

Even then, none could equal him and so the credit for being the first and foremost remained with him because his utterances are those that carry the reflection of the Divine knowledge and savor the Prophet's utterance. Accordingly, I acceded to their requests because I knew that it meant great reward, handsome reputation and a treasure of recompense.

The object of this compilation is to bring forth Amir al-Mu'minin's greatness and superiority in the are of rhetoric, in addition to his countless qualities and innumerable distinctions and to show that he had risen to the highest pinnacle of this attainment. He was singular among all those predecessors whose utterances are quoted here and the re, whereas his own utterances are such an on-rushing stream that its flow cannot be encountered and its treasure of delicacies cannot be matched. Since I proudly trace my descent from him, I have a pleasure of quoting a couplet of al-Farazdaq:

These are my forefathers O Jarir.
When we get together, can you claim forth their equals?

In my view, Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances were divisible in three categories: firstly sermons and decrees; secondly, letters and correspondence, and thirdly, maxims and counsels. Allah willing, I have decided to compile the sermons first, then the letters and finally the maxims and counsels. I then propose a separate chapter for each category, leaving blank pages in-between each so that if anything has been left out and becomes handy afterwards, it may be inserted the rein. If my utterance which is routine or in reply to some question or has some other aim does not fit in with any of my divisions, it should be included in the category for which is most suitable or to which its subject matter is most similar. In this compilation, some sections and sentences have crept in whose arrangement show disarray and disorderliness. This is so because I am only collecting the most representative brilliant utterances and do not wish to arrange or array them.

The characteristic of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) in which he is unparalleled and is shared by no one, is that his utterances on seclusion, piety, remembrance of Allah and admonition are such that when a person

pursues them without bearing in mind that they are the words of a man who enjoys great and ruling status and who controls destinies of men, he can have no doubt that these are the utterances of a man who has no interest other than seclusion and no activity save worshipping; who is confined to the interior of some house or the valley some mountain where he hears nothing save his own murmur and sees no one except himself. Would one believe that these are the utterances of one who plunges in battles with his sword drawn, severing heads and vanquishing the heroes while returning with his sword dripping with blood and the heart's fluid? And despite all of this, he is supreme among the recluse and chief among the saints. This distinction is one of those astonishing characteristics of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) with which he collected within himself contradictory qualities and patched together diverse greatness. I often mention this subject to my brethren-in-faith and cause them to ponder over it.

Within this compilation, some repetition of words or subject matter are to be expected, as the utterances of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) have been known to be related in numerous forms. Sometimes it happened that a particular utterance was found in a particular form in a tradition and was taken down in that very form. Thereafter, the same utterance was found in some other tradition either with acceptable addition or in a more attractive style of expression. In such a case with a view to further the object of compilation and to preserve the beautiful utterance from being lost it was decided to repeat it elsewhere. It has also happened that a particular utterance had appeared earlier but due to remoteness it has been entered again. This is through omission, not by intent.

In spite of all this I do not claim that I have collected Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances from all the sources and that no single sentence of any type or construction has been left out. In fact I do not rule out the possibility that whatever has been left out might be more than what has been collected and what has been in any knowledge and use is far less than what has remained beyond my reach. My task was to strive to the best of my capacity and it was Allah's part to make the way easy and guide me to the goal—if Allah so wills.

Having completed my work, both in the collection and compilation of this manuscript, Nahjul-Balagha, the pathway of rhetoric would be the appropriate title of the book, in that it would open the doors of eloquence for the reader and shorten its approach for him or her, the scholar and the student would meet their needs from it and the

rhetoricians as well as the recluse would find their objectives in it. In this book will be found a wonderful discussion on Allah's Oneness, Justness and His being free from body and form, that will quench every thirst (for learning), provide a cure for every malady (of unbelief) and remove every doubt. I seek from Allah succor, protection against straying, correctness of action and His assistance. I seek His protection against mistakes of heart before mistakes of tongue and against mistakes of speech before mistakes of action. He is my Reliance and He is the best Trustee.

Notes:

1. Al-Farazdaq, whose name was Hamman ibn Ghalib, belonged to the tribe of Banu Darim and was a notable poet. He was generally at odds with another Arab poet named Jarir ibn Atiyyah and they showed their merit only in mutual abuse and boasting over each other. The quoted couplet of al-Farazdaq is a link from that chain, wherein he addresses Jarir saying, "My forefathers were such as you have just heard, now you come forward with what your forefathers were and if there were any one like mine, name them before all of us. Reciting this couplet about his own forefathers Sayyid ar-Radi challenges everyone to bring forth their like, if any. Al-Farazdaq had addressed only Jarir but its quotation here has made it general and universal when its addressee is no more one single individual, but every person can consider himself to be its addressee. Despite this generality and universality the challenge to Aname their like remains unresponsive like the Quranic challenge: "... then bring forth its Like... etc."

Sayyid ar-Radi has pointed at this relationship and distinction at such an appropriate moment that there can be no better occasion because the greatness of the personality (namely Amir al-Mu'minin (ع)) through whom he claims pride has already been mentioned and eyes have stood dazzled at the brilliance of his status while minds have acknowledged the sublimity of his status. Now hearts can easily be made to bow before the height and greatness of this individual who bears relationship to him. Thus at the moment when hearts and minds were already inclined, Sayyid ar-Radi's eloquence-conscious eyes turned the sight towards himself as he was the ray of the sun whose abundant light dazzled the eye and a scion of the same lineal tree whose root is in the earth and whose branch extends up to the sky. Now who is there who would remain unaffected by this relationship and distinction and refuse to acknowledge his greatness and sublimity?

2. In the world, such persons are rarely found in whom besides one or two virtuous qualities other qualities might also attain prominence, much less the convergence of all contradictory qualities. Because every temperament is not suited for the development of every quality, each quality has a peculiar tempo and each virtue needs a particular climate and they are appropriate only for such qualities or virtues with which they accord. But where there is contradiction instead of harmony, the natural tendencies act as obstacles and do not allow any other quality to grow. For example, generosity and bountifulness demand that a person should possess the feeling of pity and God-fearing so that on seeing anyone in poverty or want, his heart would rend and his feelings would be disturbed at other's tribulations. While the dictates of bravery and fighting require that instead of pity and compassion there should be the passion of bloodshed and killing, prompting the person at every moment to enter into scuffle, ready to kill or be killed. These two qualities differ so widely that it is not possible to fuse the delicacies of generosity into the stiff manifestations of bravery just as bravery cannot be expected from Hatim nor generosity from Rustam. But the personality of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) showed full accord with every greatness and complete harmony with every accomplishment and there was no good attribute or accomplishment which he lacked, nor any robe of greatness or beauty which did not fit his body. Thus the contradictory qualities of generosity and bravery were found in him side by side. If he rained like the cloud in generosity, he also fought bravely standing firm as a mountain. Thus, his generosity and liberty of nature was of a degree that even during days of want and starvation, a major portion of whatever he earned as the wage of his day's toil was distributed among the poor and the starving. He would never allow a beggar to return disappointed from his door, so much so that even when in the battlefield the enemy asked him for his sword, he threw it before him being confident of the prowess of his naked arm.

An Urdu couplet says the following:
The unbeliever depends on his sword
But the believer fights even without it.

And his bravery and courage was such that the onslaught of armies could not shake the firmness of his foot with the result that he achieved success in every encounter and even the most brave fighter could not save his life in an encounter with him. Thus, Ibn Qutaybah writes in Al-Ma`arif saying, "Whomsoever he encountered bowed down to him. The heartless nature of the brave is not prone to thinking or pondering. Ali (ع) had the quality of thinking of the highest degree. Thus,

al-Shafi'i said as follows: 'What can I say about a man in whom three qualities existed with three other qualities that were never found together in any other man: generosity despite want, bravery with sagacity and knowledge with practical achievements?'"

It was the result of this proper thinking and correct judgement that after the death of the Prophet (ص) when some people advised him to fight and promised to enlist warriors for him he rejected this advice. Although on such occasions, even a slight support is enough to encourage the heartless brave. Yet, the farsighted mind of Ali (ع) saw at once that if a battle was waged at that moment, the voice of Islam would be submerged under the clatter of swords. Even then, if success was achieved it would be said that the status was gained by the power of the sword and there was no right for it. Thus, by withholding his sword on the one hand he provided protection to Islam and on the other saved his own right from the imputation of bloodshed.

When the veins are full of daring blood and the bosom full of flames of anger and wrath, it is extremely difficult to curb the passion of vengeance by adopting the course of forgiveness and, despite authority and power, to pardon and overlook. But Ali's metal used to shine on such occasions when his forgiving nature would accommodate even his bloodthirsty foes. Thus, at the end of the Battle of Jamal he made a general proclamation that no one who left the field or sought out protection would be assaulted and he let go without any punishment, even such enemies as Marwan ibn al-Hakam and Abdullah ibn az-Subayr. And the treatment that he meted out to Aisha. Aisha was a matchless manifestation of his nobility and high character and, in spite of her open enmity and rebellion, he sent with her women in men's garb to escort her to Medina.

By giving his own personal malice the garb of fundamental differences, man not only deceives others but also tries to keep himself under deception. In these conditions such a delicate situation arises that man fails to distinguish and separate his personal malice from a fundamental difference but easily mixes them together and considers that he has followed the Command of Allah and in this way he satisfies his passion for vengeance as well. But Amir al-Mu'minin's discerning eyes never got deceived nor did they willingly deceive themselves. Thus, on an occasion after bringing down his opponent and placing himself on his bosom the vanquished opponent then spat on his face. As a mortal man, the Imam's rage should have risen and his hand should have moved

quicker. Instead of being enraged, he got off from the man's bosom lest his action would be tarnished by personal feeling and slew him only after the anger had subsided.

There is nothing in common between combat and encounter and seclusion and God-fearing because one shows valor and courage while the other supplication and submission. But Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was a unique combination of both of these qualities as his hands that were bound in devotion were equally active in the battlefield and side by side with relaxing in seclusion for devotion he was a common visitor of the field of action. The scene of the night of Harir puts human wit in astonishment and wonder when closing his eyes to the bloody action around, he spread his prayer cloth and engaged himself in prayer with full peace of mind and heart while arrows were darting off sometimes over his head and sometimes from his right or left. But he remained engaged in Allah's remembrance without any fear or apprehension. Upon finishing, he again cast his hand on the sword's handle and the fierce battle that then followed is unparalleled in history. The status was that on all sides there was such hue and cry and fleeing activity that even voices falling on the ears could not be discerned. Of course, after every moment or so his own call of Allahu Akbar rose in the atmosphere and resounded in the ears and every such call meant death of a foe. Those who counted these calls of takbir recorded their number as five hundred and twenty-three.

The taste for learning and acquiring knowledge of Allah does not combine with material activity but Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) adorned the meetings of learning and scholarship along with war-like pursuits and he watered the field of Islam with springs of learning and truth along with shedding streams of blood (in battles).

When there is perfection of learning, then even if there is not a complete absence of action, there must no doubt exist shortness of action, but Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) treaded the field of knowledge and action equally, as has been already shown in al-Shafi`i's poetry.

Examples of harmony in utterance and action are quite rare but Amir al-Mu'minin's action preceded his utterance, as he himself says the following: "O people I do not exhort you to any action but that I myself first proceed towards it before you and do not desist you from any matter but that I first desist from it myself.

As soon as we think of a recluse and a pious man we visualize a face full of frowns because for piety, severity of temper and hardness of face are inseparable so much so that the thought of a smile on the lips of a pious man is regarded as a sin. But despite extreme piety and self-denial, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) always had such an appearance that his light temper and brightness of face was apparent from his looks and his lips always bore a playful smile. He never showed frowns on his forehead like the dry recluse, so much so that when people could not find any defect in him, this very lightness of his temper was taken to be his fault, while a hard temper and a bitter face were held to be a virtues.

If a man possesses a cheerful heart and a joyous temper, he cannot command authority over others; but Amir al-Mu'minin's cheerful face was so full of awe and dignity that no eye could face it. Once Mu`awiyah tauntingly said, "May Allah bless Ali! He was a man of cheerful disposition." Then Qays ibn Sa`d retorted, "By Allah! Despite a cheerful disposition and an entertaining countenance, he was more awe-inspiring than a hungry lion, and this awe was due to his piety, not like your fear of the miscreants of Syria!"

Where there is rule and authority there is also a crowd of servants and workers, checks of grandeur and eminence with equipment of pageantry, but Amir al-Mu'minin's period of rule was an example of the highest simplicity. In him, people saw only a tattered turban in place of a royal crown, patched apparel in place of the regal robes and the floor of earth in place of the ruler's throne. He never liked grandeur nor allowed a show of external grandiosity. Once he was passing on a horseback when Harb ibn Shurahbil started walking with him and began talking. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said to him, "Get back because walking on foot with me by one like you is mischievous for the ruler (me) and brings an insult to the believer (you)."

In short, he was such a versatile personality in whom numerous contradictory qualities had joined together and all the good attributes were centered in their full brightness as though his self was a collection of several selves and each self was an astounding portrait of achievement which showed forth the delineation of distinction in its untainted form and on whose accomplishment one wonders with bewilderment.

A Persian couplet says the following:

The figure of my beloved is so beautiful that when I cast my glance on the body from head to toe,

> Every spot thereof calls my attention claiming to be the most enchanting.

The Editor

This is the first book edited by our brother, Yasin T. al-Jibouri, which Tahrike-Tarsile-Quran, Inc. is very pleased to publish, hoping it will not be the last. Ansariyan Publications (P.O. Box 37185/187, Qum, Iran) has already published three of his own original works and one of his translations. The first of his works which Ansariyan published was Fast of the Month of Ramadan: Philosphy and Ahkam, and the second was his best book yet titled Allah: the Concept of God in Islam (744 pages). Ansariyan also published his translation of Al-Murja'at: A Sunni-Shi'ite Dialogue which was published for the first time in 1995 in Beirut, Lebanon, by Imam Hussain Foundation, and now we understand it has also been published in India as well. We hope there will be more! Since the reader is most likely interested in knowing who the Editor of this book is, we would like to state the following:

Al-Jibouri was born on August 14, 1946 in Baghdad, Iraq, and he lived most of his life in the holy city of al-Kadhimiyya (Kazimain). In 1969, he graduated from the College of Arts, Baghdad University, where he majored in English which he taught at a high school in Babylon (Hilla) then at a vocational institute in al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, from which he flew in 1972 to the United States in order to pursue his Graduate degree which he earned in 1978. In the Winter of 1973, he founded the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc. and started in January of 1974 editing and publishing its newsletter Islamic Affairs which evolved from a four-page newsletter to a twelve-page bulletin, becoming the most widely circulated Shi`a publication in the United States with readers in all the 50 U.S. States and in 67 countries world-wide.

In 1975, al-Jibouri received instructions to facilitate the entry to the United States of the very first representative of the then Supreme Ayatullah Abul-Qasim al-Khoei, may Allah reward him, in North America, namely Shaikh Muhammed Sarwar of Quetta, Pakistan who, due to the sponsorship of the editor, did, indeed, arrive at the U.S. on January 25, 1976; a few days later, the Shaikh became al-Jibouri's room-mate. A few months later, the Shaikh moved from Atlanta to New York where there has been a much larger Shi`a population.

Al-Jibouri not only writes his books, but he also typesets them and often designs their covers as well. He developed a passion for computers, hardware and software, and in March of 1988, he obtained a Certificate with honors from N.R.I. of Washington, D.C., in microcomputers and microprocessors and later added to it three more Certificates in electronics and programming, including advanced programming. Putting that knowledge together, he wrote more than a hundred dBASE programs in order to accommodate his extensive and sophisticated mailing list and those of others, proving that we all ought to put modern technology at the service of Islam and Muslims. Presently, he is working as a full-time reporter while studying to be an Oracle Developer and Database Administrator, and he hopes to spend the last years of his life designing web-sites for various Shi`a organizations throughout the world that utilize the Internet to get their message across. Indeed, the Internet is the wave of the future. It provides us with the fastest and cheapest way of communication and advertising as well as publicizing for our faith. If you have access to the Internet, you may search for his numerous articles under the name "Jibouri" while using Alta Vista as your search engine.

The editor has edited and revised three English translations of the Holy Quran by: 1) S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, 2) A. Yusuf Ali, and 3) M.H. Shakir. He also edited and typeset several newsletters and magazines, including Middle East Business Magazine of which he became Senior Editor. Among the other books which he edited are: Socio-Economic Justice with Particular Reference to Nahjul-Balagha by Dr. S.M. Waseem, and A Biography of Leaders of Islam by Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqwi, English translation by Dr. Sayyid Nazir Hasan Zaidi. He also edited 14 pamphlets for the youths titled The Fourteen Infallibles which were published in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1419 A.H./1998 A.D. and which were originally written by M.N. Sultan. They are very professionally produced pamphlets that employ pictorial narratives and an easy and flowing style, and they ought to be in the possession of each and every Muslim family raising children and caring for the youths.

The Editor has also translated five other books where his name as the Translator was deliberately omitted by the author who wanted to give the impression that he wrote them, rather than had them translated for him; these are: 1) Best Month, Best Night; 2) The Book of Istikhara; 3)Weapon of the Prophets; 4) Miracles of the Holy Quran and 5) The Great Names of Allah.

So far, the list of the books which he has written includes the following titles arranged chronologically according to their completion but not necessarily the date of publication: 1) Memoirs of a Shi`a Missionary in America: Two Decades of Da`wah (his auto-biography which details his experience in Islamic work in the U.S.), 2) Fast of the Month of Ramadan: Philosophy and Ahkam, 3) Mary and Jesus in Islam, 4) Allah: the Concept of God in Islam, 5) Muhammed: the Prophet and Messenger of Allah, 6) The Ninety-Nine Attributes of Allah, 7) Kerbala' and Beyond (this book), and 8) Ghadir Khumm: Where Islam was Perfected.

In 1980, when Imam Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr was martyred, al-Jibouri shifted his attention to politics, putting out several pamphlets, circulars, letters to the news media and two newsletters, Islamic Revival and Rafidain News. Islamic Revival was dedicated to the Islamic liberation movements throughout the Muslim world in general and in Iraq in particular, and it strongly supported the Islamic Revolution in Iran which was being viciously attacked and distorted by the anti-Islamic racist and hateful Jewish Zionist news media in the U.S.

Our brother al-Jibouri is a well known translator, and he is the very first person ever to translate the works of the Martyr Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr, the greatest economist, philosopher, author and political figure in the modern history of Iraq, such as: A General Outlook at Rituals (which was printed in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, in 1979), Contemporary Man and the Social Problem (which was also published in Tehran in 1980), The General Bases of Banking in the Muslim Society (which was published in Maryland, U.S.A., in 1981), and What Do You Know About Islamic Economics? which was published by the Imamia Center of Lanham, Maryland, U.S.A., in the month of Ramadan 1410 A.H./April 1990 A.D. Al-Jibouri twice published his translation titled A General Outlook at Rituals here in the U.S., getting their latest registered with the Library of Congress of Washington, D.C. He also translated and/or published many other titles; among them are: A Biography of Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr, The Form of Islamic Government and Wilayat al-Faqeeh, About the World Political Situation from a Muslim's Viewpoint, and Our Faith. The latter work is written by Sayyid Muhammed Husain al-Jalali, a famous scholar, researcher, critic and theologian now living in Chicago, Illinois. Other works he translated are: A Biography of Imam al-Rida (by the late Shaikh Muhammed Jawad Fadlallah; this book was published in the United Kingdom), Al-Muraja`at: A Shi`i-Sunni Dialogue (by Sharafud-Deen Sadr ad-Deen al-Musawi; this book was published in Beirut, Lebanon, in

1415 A.H./1995 A.D. and had previously been translated and published under the title The Right Path), Shi`as are the Ahl al-Sunnah (by Dr. Muhammed al-Tijani al-Samawi; this book was published in New York in 1996 in New York by Vantage Press and is available for sale on the Internet from both Amazon Books and Barnes and Noble Books, and its ISBN number is: 0-533-12055-1 and the reader is strongly urged to get his/her own copy of it; its first copies were sold "like hot cakes;" therefore, Vantage Press had to reprint it all over again), and Maqtal al-Husain by the late Abd al-Razzaq al-Muqarram, which is the major reference utilized for the writing of this book. The Editor is now translating Al-Ihtijaj by `allama Abu Mansur Ahmed ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib al-Tibrisi, a 6th century A.H. (12th century A.D.) scholar. Among his latest translations are: Al-Siraj: the Lantern on the Path to Allah Almighty of Shaikh Hussain ibn Ali ibn Sadiq al-Bahrani, Edited By Habib al-Kazimi**,** and The Truth about the Shi`ah Ithna-`Asheri Faith of Dr. As`ad Wahid al-Qasim.

Al-Jibouri has also written numerous essays and articles dealing with various themes. Most of them were published in more than one publication, whereas he circulated the others on his own throughout the U.S. and abroad. Several of his articles were published in Islamic Monitor, a fairly short-lived magazine (lived for less than 3 years) which used to be published here in Washington, D.C. Among such articles carried the following headings: "An Interview with Professor Fazlallah Reza" (once chancellor of the University of Tehran, Ambassador at Paris to the United Nation's UNESCO and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Canada), "Violation of Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia," "Bahrain: A Shameful Human Rights Record," "The Drug Epidemic," and many others. Some of his political writings appeared in Echo of Islam. His other writings also appeared in Mahjubah magazine of Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, and in Ja`fari Observer magazine of Bombay, India, and elsewhere.

Yasin T. al-Jibouri has received recognition from both Muslims and non-Muslims in the U.S. and abroad. He is discussed in detail by Prof. Larry Poston in his book Islamic Da`wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam (New York, United States, and Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1992; ISBN No. 0-19-507227-8), although the information about

him is now quite outdate. There, Prof. writes about al-Jibouri saying, "As indicated earlier, the Shi'ite population in North America is quite small. It is interesting to note, however, that [Professors/Authors] Nyang and Ahmad list among the leading contributors to Muslim intellectual life in America the name of Yasin T. al-Jibouri." Prof. Poston details Islamic Affairs and both al-Jibouri's main organizations, The Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc. and the International Islamic Society of Virginia, Inc.

One of the essays which he wrote and circulated is an extensive, thorough and extremely well researched rebuttal to Samuel P. Huntington's famous article "The Clash of Civilizations?" which appeared in Foreign Affairs magazine in the Summer of 1993. His rebuttal is actually a laborious research which exhausted two weeks of his time and many sleepless nights and is dated October 26, 1993. May the Almighty assist us and keep our feet firm on His Right Path, Assirat al-Mustaqeem, Allahomma Ameen.

Part Eight

Nahjul-Balagha
Selected Sermons, Letters and Sayings
of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)

Sermon 1

In this sermon, he recalls the creation of the earth and sky and the birth of Adam:

Praise is due to Allah Whose worth cannot be described by speakers, whose bounties cannot be counted by calculators and whose claim (to obedience) cannot be satisfied by those who attempt to do so, whom the height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate and the depths of understanding cannot reach; He, for whose description no limit has been laid down, no praise exists, no time is ordained and no duration is fixed. He brought forth creation through His Omnipotence, dispersed winds through His Compassion and made firm the shaking earth with rocks.

The foremost in religion is the acknowledgment of Him. The perfection of acknowledging Him is to testify Him. The perfection of testifying Him is to believe in His Oneness. The perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him Pure. The perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute. Thus, whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognizes His like. Who recognizes His like regards Him as two. Who regards Him as two recognizes parts for Him, and who recognizes parts for Him mistakes Him, and who mistakes Him points at Him, and who points at Him admits limitations for Him, and who admits limitations for Him numbers Him.

Whoever said in what is He, held that He is contained, and whoever said on what is He held He is not on something else. He is a Being but not through phenomenon of coming into being. He Exists but not of non-Existence. He is with everything but not in physical nearness. He is different from everything but not in physical separation. He acts but without connotation of movements and instruments. He sees even when there is none to be looked at from among His creation. He is only

One, such that there is none with whom He may keep company or whom He may miss in his absence.

Creation of the Universe

He initiated creation and commenced it originally, without undergoing reflection, without making use of any experiment, without innovating any movement and without experiencing any mental aspiration. He allotted all things their times, put together their variations, gave them their properties and determined their features. He knew them before creating them, fully realizing their limits and confines and appreciated their propensities and intricacies.

When the Almighty created the openings of the atmosphere, expanse of firmament and strata of winds, He allowed water, whose waves were stormy and whose surges leapt one over the other, to flow onto it. He loaded dashing winds and breaking typhoons, ordered them to shed it back (as rain), gave the wind control over the vigor of the rain and acquainted it with its limitations. The wind blew under it while water flowed furiously over it.

Then, the Almighty created forth wind and made its movement sterile, perpetuated its status, intensified its motion and spread it far and wide. Then He ordered the wind to raise deep waters and to intensify the waves of the oceans. So the wind churned the water like the churning of curd and pushed it fiercely into the firmament, throwing its front status on the rear while the stationary status flowed till its level was raised and the surface was full of foam. Then Almighty raised the foam to the open wind and vast firmament and made therefrom the seven skies. He made the lower one as a stationary surge and the upper one as protective ceiling and high edifice without any pole to support it or nail to hold it together. Then He decorated them with stars and the light of meteors and hung in it the shining sun and effulgent moon under the revolving sky, moving the ceiling and rotating firmament.

Creation of the Angels

Then He created the openings between the high skies and filled them with all classes of His angels. Some of them are in prostration and do not rise. others are in kneeling positions and do not stand up Some of them are in array and do not leave their status. others are extolling Allah and do not get tired. The sleep of the eye or the slip of wit or languor of the body or effect of forgetfulness does not effect them.

Among them are those who work as trusted bearers of His message, those who serve, speaking tongues for His prophets and those who carry His orders and injunctions. Among them are the protectors of His creatures and guards of the doors of the gardens of Paradise. Among them are those whose steps are fixed on earth but their necks protrude into the skies. Their limbs are out on all sides, their shoulders are in accord with the columns of the Divine Throne, their eyes are cast down before it, they have spread their wings down under it and they have rendered between themselves and all else curtains of honor and screens of power. They do not think of their Creator through image, do not impute created attributes to Him, do not confine Him within abodes and do not point at Him through illustrations.

Creation of Adam (ع)

Allah collected clay from hard, soft, sweet and sour earth, which He moistened with water till it became pure and kneaded it with moisture till it became gluey. From it He carved an image with curves, joints, limbs and segments. He solidified it till it dried up for a fixed time and a known duration. Then He blew into it out of His Spirit whereupon it took the pattern of a human being with a mind that governed him, intelligence which he made use of, limbs that served him, organs that changed his status, sagacity that differentiated between truth and untruth, tastes and smells, colors and species. He was a mixture of clays of different colors, cohesive materials, divergent contradictories and differing properties like heat, cold, softness and hardness.

Then Allah asked the angels to fulfil His promise with them and to accomplish the pledge of His injunction to them by acknowledging Him through prostration to Him and submission to His honored status. So Allah said: "Prostrate to Adam, so they prostrated except Iblis (Satan). (Holy Quran, 2: 34; 7: 11; 17: 61; 18: 50; 20: 116). Self-importance withheld him and vice overcame him. So that he took pride in his own creation with fire and treated the creation of clay contemptuously. So Allah allowed him time in order to let him fully deserve His wrath and to complete (man's) test and to fulfil the promise (He had made to Satan). Thus, He said: "Verily you have been allowed time till the known Day(Holy Quran, 15: 38, 38: 81).

Thereafter, Allah placed Adam (ع) in a house where He made his life and his stay safe and He cautioned him of Iblis and his enmity. Then

his enemy (Iblis) envied Adam's abiding in Paradise and his contacts with the virtuous. So he changed his conviction into wavering and determination into weakness. He thus converted his happiness into fear and his prestige into shame. Then Allah offered to Adam (ع) the chance to repent, taught him words of His Mercy, promised him return to His Paradise and sent him down to the place of trial and procreation of Progeny.

Allah Chooses His Prophets (ع)

From Adam's progeny, Allah chose prophets and took their pledge for His revelation and for carrying His message as their trust. Throughout the course of time many people perverted Allah's trust with them and ignored His status and took associates along with Him. Satan turned them away from knowing Allah and kept them aloof from His worship. Then Allah sent His Messengers and a series of His prophets toward people to get them to fulfil the pledges of His creation, to recall His bounties to them, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom and to show them the signs of His Omnipotence. Of these signs He showed the sky which is raised over them, the earth that is placed beneath them, a means of livelihood to sustain, death that makes them die, ailments that turn them old and incidents that successively betake them.

Allah never allowed His creation to remain without a Prophet (ص) deputed by Him, or a book sent down from Him or a binding argument or a standing plea. These Messengers were such that they did not feel little because of smallness of their number or the largeness of the number of their falsifiers. Among them was either a predecessor who would name the one to follow or the follower who had been introduced by the predecessor.

The Prophethood of Muhammad (ص)

In this way, ages passed by and times rolled on. Fathers passed away while sons took their places till Allah deputed Muhammad (ص) as His Prophet, in fulfillment of His promise and in completion of His Prophethood. Muhammad's pledge had been taken from the Prophet (ص) s, his traits of character were well reputed and his birth was honorable. The people of the earth at this time were divided in different parties, their aims were separate and ways were diverse. They either loved Allah and His creation or twisted His Names or turned to those other than Him. Through Muhammad (ص), Allah guided them out of wrong and with his efforts took them out of ignorance.

Then Allah chose Muhammad (ص) to meet Him, selected him for His own nearness, regarded him too dignified to remain in this world and decided to remove him from this place of trial. So He drew him towards Himself with honor. Allah may shower His blessing on him and his progeny.

The Holy Quran and the Sunnah

But the Prophet (ص) left among you the same that other prophets left among their people, as Prophets do not leave their people intentionally (in the dark) without a clear path and a standing ensign. He left the Book of your Creator clarifying its permission and prohibitions, its obligations and discretion, its repealing injunctions and the repealed ones, its permissible matters and compulsory ones, its particulars and the general ones, its lessons and illustrations, its long and the short ones, its clear and obscure ones, detailing its abbreviations and clarifying its obscurities.

In it there are some verses whose knowledge[1] is obligatory and others whose ignorance by the people is permissible. It also contains what appears to be obligatory according to the Book[2] but its repeal is signified by the Prophet's action (Sunnah) or that which appears compulsory according to the Prophet's action but the Book allows not following it. Or there are those which are obligatory in a given time but not so after that time. Its prohibitions also differ. Some are major ones for which there exists the threat of fire (Hell) and others are minor ones for which there are prospects of forgiveness. There are also those of which a small portion is also acceptable (to Allah) but they are capable of being expanded.

In this Same Sermon, He Spoke thus about the Hajj:

Allah has made obligatory upon you the pilgrimage (hajj) to His sacred House which is the turning point for the people who go to it as beasts or pigeons go towards spring water. Allah, the most Glorified One, made it a sign of their supplication before His Greatness and their acknowledgment of His Dignity. He selected from among His creation those, who on listening to His call, responded to it and testified to His word. They stood in the status of His Prophets and resembled His angels who surround the Divine Throne securing all the benefits of performing His worship and hastening towards His promised forgiveness. Allah, the most Glorified One, made it (His sacred House) an emblem for Islam and an object of respect for those who turn to it. He made obligatory its pilgrimage and laid down its claim for which He held you responsible to discharge it. Thus, Allah, the most Glorified One, said:

"Allah (purely) for Allah, is incumbent upon mankind, the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can afford to journey thither. And whoever denies, then verily Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the Worlds" (Holy Quran, 3: 96).

The foremost in religion (din) is His knowledge. The literal meaning of din is obedience and its popular sense is a code. whether the literal sense is taken or the popular one, in either case, if the mind is devoid of any conception of Divinity, there would be no question of obedience, nor of following any code because when there is no aim there is no point in advancing towards it. Where there is no object in view there is no sense in making efforts to achieve it. Nevertheless, when the nature and guiding faculty of man bring him in contact with a superior Authority and his taste for obedience and impulse of submission subjugates him before a Deity, he finds himself bound by certain limitations as against abject freedom of activity. These very limitations are din (religion) whose point of commencement is knowledge of Allah and acknowledgment of His Being.

After pointing out the essentials of the Divine knowledge Amir, al-Mu'minin has described its important constituents and conditions. He holds those stages of such knowledge which people generally regard as the point of highest approach to be insufficient. He says that its first stage is that with the natural sense of search for the unknown and the guidance of conscience or on hearing from the followers of religions an image of the Unseen Being known as Allah is formed in the mind. This image, in

fact, is the forerunner of the obligation to thinking and reflection and to seeking His knowledge. But those who love idleness, or are under pressure of environment, do not undertake this search despite the creation of such an image and the image fails to get testified. In this case they remain deprived of the Divine knowledge. Since access to the stage of testifying after the formation of image is by volition, they deserve to be questioned about it. But one who is moved by the power of this image goes further and considers thinking and reflection necessary. In this way one reaches the next stage in the attainment of the Divine knowledge, namely to search for the Creator through diversification of the creation and species of creatures. This is so because every picture is a solid and inflexible guide to the existence of its painter and every effect to the action of its cause. When he casts his glance around himself he does not find a single thing which might have come into existence without the act of a maker so much so that he does not find the sign of a footstep without a walker nor a construction without a builder. How can he comprehend that this blue sky with the sun and the moon in its expanse and the earth with the exuberance of its grass and flowers could have come into existence without the action of a Creator? therefore, after observing all that exists in the world and the regulated system of the entire creation no one can help but conclude that there is a Creator for this world of diversities because existence cannot come out of non-existence, nor can existence sprout forth from nothingness.

The Holy Quran has pointed to this reasoning thus: “What?! about Allah is there any doubt, the Originator of the heavens and the earth? (14: 10)

But this stage would also be insufficient if this testimony in favor of Allah is tarnished by belief in the divinity of some other deity.

The third stage is that His existence should be acknowledged along with belief in Unity and Oneness. Without this the testimony to Allah’s existence cannot be complete because if more gods are believed in, He would not be One. Whereas it is necessary that He should be One. The reason is that in case of more than one god the question would arise whether one of them created all this creation or all of them together. If one of them created it there should be some difference to distinguish him, otherwise, he would be accorded preferential status without reason, which is unacceptable to the mind. If all have created it collectively then the status has only two forms; either he cannot perform his functions without the assistance of others or he is above the need for their assistance. The first case means he is incapable and in need of others while the other case

means that there are several regular performers of a single act and the fallacy of both has already been shown. If we assume that all the gods performed the act of creation by dividing it among themselves, all the creation would not bear the same relationship towards the creator. This is so because each creature will bear relationship only to its own creator whereas every creature should have one and the same relationship to all creators. This is so because all the creation should have one and the same relationship to all the creators as all the created in their capacity to accept effect and all the creators in their capacity to produce effect should be similar. In short there is no way but to acknowledge Him as One because to believe in numerous creators allows no possibility of the existence of any other thing and destruction proves implicit for the earth, the sky and everything in creation. Allah, the most Glorified One, has expressed his argument in the following words:

Had there been in the heavens and the earth [other]) gods except Allah, they both (the heavens and the earth would have been) in disorder. (Holy Quran, 21: 22).

The fourth stage is that Allah should be regarded free of all defects and deficiencies, devoid of body, form, illustration, similarity, status of place or time, motion, stillness, incapability and ignorance. This is so because there can be no deficiency or defect in the perfect Being nor can anyone be deemed like Him because all these attributes bring down a being from the high status of the Creator to the low status of the created. That is why along with Unity, Allah has held purity from deficiency of equal importance.

Say: He (Allah) is One (alone). Allah, the needless. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him. (Holy Quran, 112: 1-4).

Vision perceives Him not and He perceives (all) vision; He is the Subtle, the All-aware. (Holy Quran, 6: 104).

So coin you not any similitudes to Allah; verily Allah knows (everything) and you know not. (Holy Quran, 16: 74).

Nothing whatsoever (is the re) like the like of Him, and He (alone) is the All-Hearing and the All-Seeing.(Holy Quran, 42: 11)

The fifth stage of completing His Knowledge is that attributes should not be put on Him from outside lest there be duality in His

Oneness. Deviating from its proper connotation, Unity may fall into the labyrinth of one-in-three and three-in-one because His Being is not a combination of essence and form so that attributes may cling to Him like the smell of the flowers or brightness in the stars. Rather, He is the fountainhead of all attributes and needs no medium for manifestation of His perfect Attributes. If He is named Omniscient it is because the signs of his knowledge are manifest. If He is called Omnipotent it is because every particle points to His Omnipotence and Activity. If the power to listen or to see is attributed to him, it is because the cohesion of the entire creation and its administration cannot be done without hearing or seeing. But the existence of these attributes in Him cannot be held in the same way as in the creation. He should be capable to know only after He acquires knowledge or He should be powerful and strong only after energy runs into His limbs because taking attributes as separate from His Being would connote duality and where there is duality unity disappears. That is how Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has rejected the idea of attributes being in addition to His Being, presented Unity in its true significance and did not allow Unity to be tainted with stains of multiplicity. This does not mean that adjectives cannot at all be attributed to Him. This would be giving support to those who are groping in the dark abyss of negativism, although every nook and corner in the entire Existence is brimming with His attributes and every particle of creation stands witness that He has knowledge, He is powerful, He hears and He sees. He nurtures under His care and allows growth under His mercy. The intention is that for Him, nothing can be suggested to serve as an adjunct to Him because His Self includes attributes and His attributes connote His Self. Let us learn this very theme in the words of Imam Abu `Abdillah Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) comparing it with the belief in Unity adopted by other religions then appreciate who is the exponent of the true concept of Unity.

The Imam says the following:

Our Lord, the Glorified One, the magnificent One, has knowledge of Himself even though there was nothing to know, sight of Himself even though there is nothing to behold, hearing of Himself even though there is nothing to hear and Power of Himself even though there is nothing under His Power. When He created the things and the object of knowledge came into existence, His knowledge became related to the known, hearing related to the heard, sight related to the seen and Power related to its object. (At-Tawhid by Shaikh as-Saduq, p.139).

This is the belief about which the Imams from among the Prophet's family are unanimous, but the majority group [of the Muslims, i.e. the Sunnis] has adopted a different course by creating the idea of differentiation between His Self and Attributes. Shahristani says the following on, p. 42 of his book Kitab al-Milal wal-Nihal: "According to Abul-Hassan al-Ash`ari Allah knows through (the attribute of) knowledge, is Powerful through activity, speaks through speech, hears through hearing and sees through sight."

If we regard attributes distinct from Self in this manner there would be two alternatives; either the attributes must have existed in Him or they must have occurred later. In the first case we have to recognize as many eternal objects as the attributes which all will share with Him in being eternal, but Allah is above that which people deem Him to have equals. In the second case, in addition to subjecting Him to the alternations, it would also mean that before the acquiring of the attributes He was neither knowledgeable, nor powerful, nor hearer nor beholder, and this runs counter to the basic tenet of Islam.

Allah has decreed trade lawful and has forbidden interest. (Holy Quran, 2: 275)

And when you have finished the prayer remember Allah standing and sitting and reacting and when you are secure (from danger) establish prayer. (Holy Quran, 4: 103).

O you men! Eat of what is in the earth lawful and good and follow not the foot-steps of Satan; for verily he is an open enemy unto you. (Holy Quran, 2: 168).

(And) say: I am only a man like you, it is revealed unto me that your god is but one Allah, therefore, whosoever desires to meet his Master, let him do good deeds and associate not anyone in the worship of his Master. (Holy Quran, 18: 110).

What! enjoin you upon the people righteousness and you forget your own selves? Yet you read the scripture? What?! Do you not understand?! (Holy Quran, 2: 44).

2. About the Holy Quran, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says that it contains description of the permitted and forbidden acts such as Allah has allowed the sale and purchase but prohibited usury.

It clarifies obligatory and optional acts such as AWhen you have finished the prayer, remember Allah rising, sitting or lying and when you feel safe (from the enemy) then say the prayers (as usual) (4: 104).

Here, prayer is obligatory while other forms of remembering (Allah) are optional. It has repealing and repealed verses such as about the period of seclusion after the husband's death: four months and ten days, or the repealed one such as: till one year without going out. This shows that this period of seclusion should be one year. In particular places it permits what is forbidden such as: "Whoever is compelled, without being willfully wrongful or transgressing, commits no sins."

It has positive injunctions such "One should not add anyone with Allah in worship. It has particular and general injunctions. Particular is the one where the word shows generality but the sense is limited such as: "I have made you superior to other nations of the world, O Banu Isra'il."

Here, the meaning of "nations of the world" is confined to that particular time, although the word is general in its literal meaning. The general injunction is one which is extensive in meaning such as Allah has knowledge of everything. It has lessons and illustrations such as Allah caught him in the punishment of this world and the next and there is a lesson in it.

So Allah seized him, with the chastisement in the hereafter and the life before (it) (Holy Quran. 79: 25)

Verily in this there is a lesson unto him who fears (Allah). (Holy Quran, 79: 26)

A kind word and pardon is better than charity that is followed by injury and verily Allah is Self-sufficient, the Most forbearing. (Holy Quran, 2: 263)

And remember when We made a covenant with you and raised the Tur (mountain) above you (saying): Hold you fast that which We have bestowed upon you with the strength (of determination) and remember that which is the rein so that you may guard (yourself) against evil. (Holy Quran, 2: 63)

So we made it a lesson for (those of) their own times and for those (of their posterity) who came after them and an exhortation unto those who guard (themselves) against evil. (Holy Quran, 2: 66)

He it is Who fashions you in the wombs (of your mothers) as He likes; There is no god but He, the All-mighty, the al-Wise. (Holy Quran, 3: 5)

Obedience and a fair word; but when the affair is determined then if they be true to Allah, it would certainly be better for them. (Holy Quran, 47: 21)

O those who believe! It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will, and do not straiten them in order that you may take a part of what you have given, unless they are guilty of manifest lewdness; but deal kindly with them and if you hate them, it may be that you hate a thing while Allah has placed in it abundant good. (Holy Quran, 4: 19)

Say (to the People of the Book):You dispute with us about Allah, while He is our Master and your Master, and for us are our deeds and for you are yours; to Him (Alone) we are (exclusively) loyal? (Holy Quran, 2: 139)

There is a lesson in it for whoever fears Allah, and illustrations such as "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a grain which grows seven ears each one of which bears hundred grains." It has unspecific and specific verses. Unspecific is one which has no limitation on specification such as "Recall when Moses told his people Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow."

Specific is one where denotation is limited as Allah says that Athe cow should be such that it has neither been used for ploughing nor for irrigation fields. There is clarity and obscurity in it. The clarity is that which has no intricacy such as "Verily Allah has sway over everything," while the obscurity is whose meaning has complication such as "... the Merciful One (Allah) occupies the throne" the apparent meaning of which gives the impressions as if Allah is physically "sitting" on the Throne although the intention is to underscore His authority and control. In it there are brief injunctions such as "Establish prayer" and those of deep meanings such as the verses about which says the following: The meaning is not known except to Allah and to those immersed in knowledge. Then Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) deliberates on this theme in a different way, saying that there are some things in it which are necessary to know, such as: "So be informed that there is no god except Allah" and there are others which are not necessary to know such as Aleef, laam, meem, etc. It has also injunctions which have been repealed by the Prophet's actions such as

“As for your women who commit adultery, get four male witnesses, and if four witnesses do appear, shut such women in the house till death ends their life.” This punishment was current in early Islam but was later replaced by stoning in the case of married women. In it, there are some injunctions which repealed the Prophet’s actions such as “Turn your face towards Masjid al-Haram by which the injunction for facing Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) was repealed. It also contains injunctions which are obligatory only at a particular time was repealed. It also contains injunctions which are obligatory only at a particular time after which their obligation ends, such as “When the call for prayer is made on Friday, hasten towards remembrance of Allah.” It has also indicated grades of prohibitions as the division of sins into light and serious ones such as “Tell the believers to lower their gaze” and serious ones such as “Whoever kills a believer willfully, his penalty is to remain in Hell forever.” It also contains injunctions where a little performance is enough but there is scope for further performance such as “Read the Holy Quran as much as you can.”

Verily your Master, certainly is He the All-mighty, the All-merciful. (Holy Quran, 26: 9)

Say (O Our Prophet Muhammad [ص]) to the believing men that they should cast down their gaze and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; verily Allah is All-aware of whatever you do. (Holy Quran, 24: 30)

Not equal are those of the believers who sit (holding back) to those who are hurt and who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and selves (lives). Allah has raised the strivers with their wealth and selves (lives) in rank above those sitting (holding back); to all (faithful) Allah has promised good: but those who strive He has distinguished above those who sit (linger behind and not go out to fight for the faith) a great recompense. (Holy Quran, 4: 95)

Verily, your Lord knows that you stand up (during the night for the night prayers) two-thirds of the night and (sometimes) half of it and (sometimes) a third of it and(so does) a group of those with you, and Allah measures (well) the night and the day; He knows that you can never take (correct) account of it, so He turns to you (mercifully); recite, then, whatever is easy (in the prayers) to be read of the Holy Quran; He knows that there may be among you those who are sick and others traveling in the earth seeking of the grace of Allah and others fighting in the way of Allah, so recite as much as it can easily be done of it and

establish the (regular) prayers and pay the (prescribed) zakat and offer unto Allah a goodly loan. Whatsoever good (deeds) you send forth before hand for yourselves, you will (surely) find it with Allah, that is the best and the greatest recompense, and seek the forgiveness of Allah; Verily, Allah if Oft-forgiving, most Merciful. (Holy Quran, 73: 20)

Sermon 2

Delivered on return from Siffīn before his Nomination by the Prophet (ص) for the Caliphate

I praise Allah, seeking completion of His Blessing, submitting to His Glory and expecting safety from committing His sins. I invoke His help being in need of His Sufficiency (of protection). He whom He guides does not get astray. He with whom He is hostile gets no protection. He whom He supports does not remain needy. Praise is most weighty of all that is weighed and the most valuable of all that is treasured.

I testify that there is no god but Allah the One. He has no like. My testimony has been tested in its frankness and its essence shall store it facing the tribulations that overtake us because it is the foundation stone of Belief (iman) and the first step toward good actions and the Divine pleasure. It is the means to keep Satan away.

I also testify that Muhammad (ص) is the Prophet. Allah sent him with the illustrious religion, effective emblem, written Book,[113] effulgent light, sparkling gleam and decisive in junctions in order to dispel doubts, present clear proofs, administer warning through signs and to warn of punishments. At that time people had fallen in vices whereby the rope of religion had been broken, the pillars of belief had been shaken, principles had been desecrated, system had become topsy turvy, openings were narrow, passage was dark, guidance was unknown and darkness prevailed.

Allah was being disobeyed, Satan was given support and Belief had been forsaken. As a result the pillars of religion fell down, its traces could not be discerned, its passages had been destroyed and its streets had fallen into decay. People obeyed Satan and tread his paths. They sought

[113]This is a reference to the Preserved Tablet.

water from his watering places. Through them Satan's emblems flew and his standard was raised in vices which trampled the people under their hoofs and treaded upon them with their feet. The vices stood on their toes (in full stature) and the people immersed in them were strayed, perplexed, ignorant and seduced as though in a Good House[114] with bad neighbors. Instead of sleep, they had wakefulness, and for antinomy, they had tears in the eyes. They were a land where the learned were in bridle (keeping their mouths shut) while the ignorant were honored.

In the same sermon, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) referred to Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (the Household of the Holy Prophet (ص)) as follows:

They are the trustees of His secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, center of His wisdom, valleys for His books and mountains of His religion. With them, Allah straightened the bend of religion's back and removed the trembling of its limbs.

In the same sermon, he spoke about the hypocrites thus:

They sowed vices, watered them with deception and harvested destruction. Non in the Islamic community can be taken at par with the Progeny[115]

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[114]The "Good House" means Mecca, while the "bad neighbors" phrase refers to unbelieving Quraishites.

[115]About the Progeny of the Prophet (ص), Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has said that nobody in the world can be at par with them, nor can anyone be deemed their equal in sublimity because the world is over laden with their obligations and has been able to secure eternal blessings only through their guidance. They are the corner stone and foundation of religion and the sustenance for its life and survival. They are such strong pillars of knowledge and belief that they can turn away the stormy flow of doubt and suspicion. They are such middle course among the paths of excess and backwardness that if some one goes far toward excess and exaggeration or falls behind then unless he comes back or steps forward to that middle course, he cannot be on the path of Islam. They possess all the characteristics which give the superiority in the right for vicegerency and leadership. Consequently, no one else in the *umma* enjoys the right of patronage and guardianship. That is why the Prophet (ص) declared them his vicegerents and successors. About will and succession the commentator ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite scholar, writes that there can be no doubt about the vicegerency of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) but succession cannot imply succession in status although the Shi`ite sect has so interpreted it. It rather implies succession of learning. Now, if according to him succession is taken to imply succession in learning even he does

of the Prophet (ص) (Ahl al-Bayt [ع]). One who was under their obligation cannot be matched with them. They are the foundation of religion and the pillar of belief. The forward runner has to turn back to them while the follower has to overtake them. They possess the chief characteristics for vicegerency. In their favor exists the will and succession (of the Prophet (ص)). This is the time when right has returned to its owner and diverted to its center of return.

Sermon 3

Known as the sermon as ash-Shaqshaqiyya [1]

Beware! By Allah, the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) [2] **dressed himself with it (the caliphate) and he certainly knew that my status in relationship to it was the same as the status of the axis in relationship to the hand-mill. The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly up to me. I put a curtain against he caliphate and kept myself detached from it.**

Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are feeble and

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no seem to succeed in achieving his object because even by this interpretation the right of succeeding the Prophet (ص) does not devolve on any other person. It is agreed upon that learning is the most essential requirement of *khalifah* (caliphate) because the most important of functions of the Prophet's Caliph consist of dispensation of justice, solving problems of religious laws, clarifying intricacies and administration of religious penalties. If these functions are taken away from the Prophet's deputy, his status will come down to that of a worldly ruler. He cannot be regarded as the pivot of religious authority. Therefore, either we should keep governmental authority separate from Prophet's vicegerency or accept the successor of the Prophet's knowledge to suit that status.

The interpretation of Ibn Abul-Hadid could be acceptable if Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had uttered this sentence alone, but observing that it was uttered soon after Ali's (ع) recognition as Caliph and just after it the sentence "Right has returned to its owner" exists, this interpretation of his seems baseless. Rather, the Prophet's will cannot imply any other will except that for vicegerency and caliphate and succession would imply not succession in property nor in knowledge because this was not an occasion to mention it here. But, it must mean the succession in the right leadership which stood proved as from Allah not only on the ground of kinship, but on the ground of qualities of perfection.

the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on this death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throats. I watched the plundering of my inheritance till the first one went his way but handed over the Caliphate to ibn al-Khattab after himself.

Then he quoted a verse by al-A'sha and went on to say:

My days are now passed on the camel's back (in difficulty) while there were days (of ease) when I enjoyed the company of Ja bir's brother Hayyan.[3]

It is strange that during his lifetime he wished to be released from the caliphate but he confirmed it for the other one after his death. No doubt these two shared its udders strictly among themselves. This one put the caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough. Mistakes were in plenty and also the excuses therefore. One in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein the very nostril would be slit, but if he let it loose he w9ould be thrown. Consequently, by Allah, people got involved in recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation.

Nevertheless, I remained patient despite a length of period and stiffness of trial, until when he went his way (of death) he put the matter (of Caliphate) in a group[4] and regarded me to be one of them. But good Heavens! What had I to do with his "consultation"? Where was any doubt about me with regard to the first of them that I was now considered akin to these ones? But I remained low when they were low and flew high when they flew high. One of them turned against me because of his hatred and the other got inclined the other way due to his in-law relationship and this thing and that thing, till the third man of these people stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder. With him his children of the grand-father (Umayyah) also stood up, swallowing up Allah's wealth[5] like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, till his rope broke down, his actions finished him and his gluttony brought him down prostrate.

At that moment, nothing took me by surprise, but the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced toward me form every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Hassan and Hussain were getting crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They collected around me like the herd of sheep and goats. When I took up the reins of government, one party broke away and another turned

disobedient while the rest began acting wrongfully as if they had not heard the word of Allah saying:

That abode in the hereafter, We assign if for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor (to make) mischief (the rein), and the end is (best) for the pious. (Holy Quran 28: 83)

Yes, by Allah, they had heard it and understood it but the world appeared glittering in their eyes and its embellishments seduced them. Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the learned to the effect that they should no acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders and would have given the lst one the same treatment as to the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view this world of yours is not better than the sneezing of a goat.

It is said that when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) reached this point in his sermon, a man from Iraq stood up and handed him something in writing. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) began looking at it, whereupon Ibn Abbas said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), I wish you resumed your sermon from where you broke it." Thereupon, he replied, "O Ibn Abbas, it was like the foam of a camel which gushed out but subsided." Ibn Abbas said that he never grieved over any utterance as he did over this one because Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) could not finish it as he wished to.

Ash-Sharif ar-Radi says the following: The words in this sermon Alike the rider of a camel mean to convey that when a camel rider is stiff in drawing up the rein then in this scuffle the nostril gets bruised, but if he lets it loose in spite of the camel's unruliness, it would thrown him somewhere and would get out of control. Ash-shaqshaqah is used when the rider holds up the rein and raises the camel's head upwards. In the same sense the word Ashanaqa an-naqah is use. Ibn as-Sikkit (the renown linguist) has mentioned this in Islah al-Mantiq. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has said, "ashnaqa laha" instead of "aslasa laha" and harmony could be retained only by using both in the same form. Thus, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has used "ashanaq laha" as though in place of "in rafa'a laha ra saha", that is, "If he stops it by holding up the reins, etc."

1. This sermon is known as the sermon as ash-Shaqshaqiyya and is counted among the most famous sermons of Amir al-Mu'minin. It was delivered at ar-Rahbah. Although some people have denied it to be Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance and, by attributing it to Sayyid ar-Radi (or ash-Sharif ar-Radi), have laid blame on the integrity of his acknowledge, yet truth-loving scholars have denied its veracity. Nor can there be any ground for this denial because Ali's difference of view in the matter of Caliphate is not a secret matter, so that such hints should be regarded as something alien. And, the events which have been alluded to in this sermon are preserved in the annals of history which testify to them word by word and sentence by sentence. If the same events, which are related by history, are recounted by Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), then what is the ground for denying them? If the memory of discouraging circumstance faced by him soon after the death of the Prophet (ص) appeared unpalatable to him, it should not be surprising. No doubt, this sermon hits at the prestige of certain personalities and gives a set back to the faith and belief in them, but this cannot be sustained by denying the sermon to be Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance, unless the true events are analyzed and truth unveiled. otherwise, just denying it to be Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance because it contains disparagement of certain individuals carries no weight, when other historians have related similar criticism as well. Thus (Abu Othman) Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz has recorded the following words of a sermon of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and thy are not less weighty than the criticism in the Sermon of ash-Shaqshaqiyya.

Those two passed away and the third one rose like the crow whose courage is confined to the belly. It would have been better if both his wings had been cut and his head severed.

Consequently, the idea that it is the production of Sayyid ar-Radi is far from the truth and a result of partisanship and partiality. Or else if it is the result of some research, it should be bought out. otherwise, remaining in such wishful illusion does not alter the truth, nor can the force of decisive arguments be curbed down by mere disagreement and displeasure.

Now, we set forth the testimony of those scholars and traditionists who have clearly held it to be Amir al-Mu'minin's production, so that its historical importance should become known. Among these scholars, some are those before Sayyid ar-Radi's period, some are his contemporaries and some are those who came after him but they all related it through their own chain of authority.

1) Ibn Abul-Hadid al-Mu'tazili writes that his master, Abul-Khayr Masaddiq ibn Shabib al-Sasiti (d. 605 A.H), states that he heard this sermon from Shaikh Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Amad al-Baghdadi (d. 567 A.H.), known as Ibn al-Khashshab and when he reached where Ibn Abbas expressed sorrow for this sermon having remained incomplete, Ibn al-Khashshab said to him that if he had heard the expression of sorrow from ibn `Abbas, he would have certainly asked him if there had remained with his cousin any further unsatisfied desire because excepting the Prophet (ص), he had already spared neither the predecessors nor followers and had uttered all that he wished to utter. Therefore, why should there by any sorrow that he could not say what he wished? Musaddiq says that ibn al-Khashshab was a man of folly heart and decent taste. I inquired form him whether he also regarded the sermon to be a fabrication when he replied, "By Allah, I believe it to be Amir al-Mu'minin's word as I believe you to Musaddiq ibn Shabib. I said that some people regard it to be Sayyid ar-Radi's production when he replied, "Who can ar-Radi have such guts or such style of writing. I have seen Sayyid ar-Radi's writings and know his style of composition. Nowhere does his writing match with this one and I have already seen it in books written two hundred years before the birth of Sayyid ar-Radi and I have seen it in familiar writings about which I know by which scholars or men of letters they were compiled. At that time not only ar-Radi, but even his father Abu Ahmed an-Naqib had not been born.

2) Thereafter ibn Abul-Hadid writes that he saw this sermon in the compilations of his master abu-l-Qasim (Abdullah ibn Ahmed) al-Balkhi (d. 317 A.H). He was the Imam of the Mu'tazilites in the reign of al-Muqtadir-Billah while al-Muqtadir's period was far earlier than the birth of Sayyid ar-Radi.

3) He further writes that he saw this sermon in Abu Ja`far (Muhammad ibn Abd ar-Rahman), Ibn Qibah's book Al-Insaf. He was the pupil of Abul-Qasim al-Balkhi and a theologian of the Imamiyya (Shi`ite) sect. See the Sharh of Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 1, pp. 205-206.

4) Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani (d. 679 A.H.) writes in his commentary that he had seen one such copy of this sermon which bore the writing of al-Muqtadir Billah's minister Abul Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Furat (d. 312 A.H.). Sharh al-Balagha, Vol. 1l, pp. 252-253

5) Al-Allama Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi has related the following chain of authority about this sermon from Shaikh Qutbud-Din ar-Rawandi's compilation of Minhaj al-Bard'ah fi Sharh Nahjul-Balagha:

6) In the context, Allama al-Majlisi has written that his sermon is also co ntined in the compilations of Abu Ali (Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab) al-Juba'i (d. 303 A.H.)

7) In connection with this very authenticity Allama al-Majlisi writes the following:

Al-Qadi Abdul-Jabbar ibn Ahmed al-Asad-Abadi (d. 415 A.H.) who was a strict Mu'tazilite explains some expressions of this sermon in his book Al-Mughni and tries to prove that it does not strike against any preceding caliph but does not deny it to be Amir al-Mu'minin's composition. (ibid. p. 161)

8) Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Ali, Ibn Babawayh (d. 381 A.H.) writes the following:

Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ishaq at-Talaqani told us that Abdul-Aziz ibn Yahya al-Jalludi (d. 332 A.H.) told him that Abu Abdillah Ahmed ibn Ammar ibn Khalid told him that Yahya ibn Abdul-Hamid al-Himmani (d. 228 A.H) told him that Isa ibn Rashad related this sermon from Ali (ع) ibn Hudhayfah and he from `Ikrimah and he from Ibn Abbas. (Ilal ash-Shara'i', Vol. 1, pp. 122, p. 144: Ma'ani al-Akhbar, cha, p. 22, pp. 360-361).

9) then Ibn Babawayh records the following chain of authorities:

Muhammad ibn Ali Majilawayh related this sermon to us and he took it from his uncle Muhammad ibn Abul-Qasim and he form Ahmed ibn Abu Abdillah (Muhammad ibn Khalid) al-Barqi and he from his father and he from (Muhammad) ibn Abu Umayr and he from Aban ibn Othman and he from Aban ibn Taghlib and he from `Ikrimah and he from Ibn Abbas. (AIlal al-Shara'i', Vol. 1, cha, p. 122, p. 146; Ma'ani al-Akhbar, pp. 22, 361).

10) Abu Ahmed al-Hassan ibn Abdillah ibnSa'id al-'Askari (d; 382 A.H.) who counts among great scholars of the Sunnis has written commentary and explanation of this sermon that has been recorded by ibn Babawayh in AIlal ash-shara'i' and Ma`aani al-Akhbar.

11) As-Sayyid Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri writes the following:

The author of Kitab al-Gharz, namely Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi al-Kufi (d. 283 A.H.), has related this sermon through his own chain of authorities. The date of completion of writing this book is Tuesday the 13th Shawwal 255 A.H. And in the same year, Murtada al-Musawi was born. He was older in age than his brother Sayyid ar-Radi (Al-Anwar an-Nu'maniyya, p.37).

12) Sayyid Radi ad-Din Abul-Qasim Ali ibn Musa, Ibn Tawus al-Hussaini al-Hilli (d. 664 A.H.) has related this sermon from Kitab al-Gharz with the following chain of authorities:

This sermon was related to us by Muhammad ibn Yusuf who related it from al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn `Abdul-Karim az-Za'far Sa'id and he form Muhammad ibn Zakariyyah al-Ghallabi and he from Ya'qub ibn Ja`far ibn Sulayman and he from his father and he from his grandfather and he from ibn `Abbas. (Translation of Al-Tara'if, p. 202)

13) Shaikh al-Ta'ifa, Muhammad ibn al-Hassan at-Tusi (d. 460 A.H.) writes the following:

(Abul-Fath Hilal ibn Muhammad ibn Ja`far) al-Haffar related this sermon to us. He related it from Abul-Qasim (Isma'il ibn Ali ibn Ali (Du'bul and he from his father and he from his brother Du'bul (ibn Ali al-Khuza'i) and he from Muhammad ibn Salamah al-Shami and he from Zurarh ibn A'yan and he from Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Ali (Shaikh al-Saduq) and he from Ibn Abbas (Al-Amli, p. 237).

14) Shaikh al-Mufid (Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu'man, (d. 413 A.H.) who was the teacher of Sayyid ar-Radi writes about he chain of authorities of this sermon;

A number of narrators of traditions have related this sermon form ibn Abbas through numerous chains (Al-Irshad, p. 135).

15) Alam al-Huda (flag-posts of guidance) Sayyid al-Murtada, who was the elder brother of Sayyid ar-Radi, has recorded it on pp. 203-204 of his book Al-Shafi.

16) Abu Mansur at-Tibrisi writes the following:

A number of relaters have given an account of this sermon from Ibn Abbas through various chains. Ibn Abbas said that he was in the audience of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) at ar-Rahba (a place in Kufa which remains bearing this name) when conversation turned to caliphate and those who had preceded him as Caliphs when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) berated a sign and delivered this sermon.[116]

17) Abul-Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Abdillah and Sibt ibn al-Jawzi al-Hanafi (d. 654 A.H.) write the following:

Our Shaikh Abul Qasim an-Nafis al-Anbari related this sermon to us through his chain of authorities that ends with ibn Abbas, who said that after allegiance had been paid to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) as caliph, he was sitting on the pulpit when a man from the audience inquired why he had remained quiet still then, whereupon Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) delivered this sermon ex-tempore. (Tadhkirat Khawass al-Umma, p. 73)

18) Judge Ahmed ibn Muhammad, ash-Shihab al-Khafaji (d. 1069 A.H.) writes the following with regard to its authenticity:

It is stated in the utterances of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (ع) that AIt is strange during his lifetime he (Abu Bakr) wanted to give up the Caliphate, but he strengthened its foundation fo the other one after his death.) (Sharh Durrat al-Ghawwas, p. 17)

19) Shaikh Ala ad-Dawla as-Simnani writes the following: "The Commander of the Faithful and the master of people of knowledge Ali (ع) has stated in one of his brilliant sermons: 'This is the Shaqshaqah that burst forth' as we read in Al-Urway li ahl al-khalwa wal-jalwa, p. 3, a manuscript at the Nasiriyya Library, Lucknow, India."

20) Abul-Fadl Ahmed ibn Muhammad al-Maydani (d. 518 A.H.) has written in connection with the word Shaqshaqa:

One sermon of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Ali is known as Khutbat ash-Shaqshaqiyya (sermon of the camel's foam) (Majma' al-Amthal, Vol. 1, p 369).

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[116]al-Tibrisi, *Al-Ihtijaj*, p. 101.

21) In fifteen places in Al-Nihaya, while explaining the words of this sermon, Abus-Sa'ada, namely Mubarak ibn Muahmmed ibn al-Athir al-Jazri (d. 606 A.H) has acknowledged it to be Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance.

22) Shaikh Muhammad Tahir Patni, while explaining the same words in Majma' Bihar al-Anwar, testifies that this sermon belongs to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), saying, "Ali (ع) says so.

23) Abul-Fadl ibn Manzur (d. 711 A.H.) has acknowledged it as Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance in his lexicon titled Lisan al-`Arab, Vol. 12, p. 54 by saying, "In the sayings of Ali in his sermon AIt is the camel's foam that burst forth then subsided.

24) Mujaddid al-Din, namely al-Firuz Aabadi (d. 816/817) A.H.) has recorded under the words Shaqshaqa in his lexicon (Al-Qamus, Vol. 3, p. 251)

The Shaqshaqiyya sermon is by Ali (ع); it is named so because when Ibn Abbas asked him to resume it where he had left it, he said, "OIbn Abbas! It was the foam of a camel that burst forth then subsided.

25) the compiler of Muntaha al-Adab writes the following:

The Shaqshaqiyya of Ali is attributed to Ali (Allah may honor his face).

26) Shaikh Muhammad `Abdoh, themufti of Egypt, recognizing it as Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance, has written its explanations.

27) Muhammad Muhyi'd-Din `Abdul-Hamid, professor of Arabic at Al-Azhar University, has written annotations on Nahjul-Balagha, adding a Foreword in the beginning wherein he recognizes all such sermons which contain disparaging remarks to be the utterances of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع).

In the face of these evidences and undeniable proofs is there any scope to hold that it is not Amir-al-Mu'minin's production and that Sayyid ar-Radi prepared it himself?

28) Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has referred to Abu Bakr's accession to the caliphate metaphorically as having dressed himself with it. This

was a common metaphor. Thus, when Othman was called to give up the Caliphate, he replied, "I shall not put off this shirt which Allah has put on me. No doubt Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has not attributed this dressing of Caliphate to Allah, but to Abu Bakr himself with the Caliphate. He knew that this outfit had been stitched for this own body and his status with relationship to the Caliphate was that of the axis in the hand-mill which cannot retain its central status without it nor be of any use. Similarly, he held "I was the central pivot of the Caliphate, were I not the re, its entire system would have gone astray from the pivot. It was I who acted as a guard for its organization and order and guided it through all difficulties. Currents of learning flowed form my bosom and watered it on all sides. My status was high beyond imagination but lust of world seekers for governance became a tumbling stone for me and I had to confine myself to seclusion. Blinding darkness prevailed all around and there was intense gloom everywhere. The young grew old and the old departed for the graves but this patience-breaking period would not end. I kept watching with my eyes the plundering of my own inheritance and saw the passing of Caliphate from one hand to the other but remained patient as I could not stop their high-handedness for lack of means."

Need for the Prophet's Caliph and the Method of his Appointment

After the Prophet (ص) of Islam the presence of such a personality was inevitable who could stop the community form disintegration and guard the religious law against change, alteration and interference by those who wanted to twist it to suit their own desires. If this very need is denied then there is no sense in attaching so much importance to the succession of the Prophet (ص) that the assemblage in saqifa of Banu Sa`idah should have been considered more important than the burial of the Prophet (ص). If the need is recognized, the question is whether or not the Prophet (ص), too, realized it. If it is held he could not attend to it and appreciate its need or absence of need it would be the biggest proof for regarding the Prophet's mind to be blank for thinking of means to stop the evils of innovations and apostasy in spite of having given warning about them. If it is said that he did realize it but had to leave it unresolved on account of some advantage, then instead of keeping it hidden, the advantage should be clearly indicated; otherwise, silence without purpose would constitute delinquency in the discharge of the obligations of Prophethood. If there was some impediment, it should be disclosed; otherwise, we should agree that just as the Prophet (ص) did not leave any

item of religion incomplete, he did not leave this matter either and did propose such a course of action for it, that if it was acted upon religion would have remained safe against the interference of others.

The question now is that was that course of action. If it is taken to be the consensus of opinion of the community, then it cannot truly take place as in such consensus acquiescence of every individual is necessary; but taking into account the difference in human temperaments, it seems impossible that they would agree on any single point. Nor is there any example where on such matters there has been no single voice of dissent. How then can such a fundamental need be made dependent on the occurrence of such an impossible even B need on which converges the future of Islam and the good of the Muslims. Therefore, the mind is not prepared to accept this criterion. Nor is tradition in harmony with it, as judge Adud ad-Din al-`Iji has written in Sharh al-Mawaqif: "You should know that Caliphate cannot depend upon unanimity of election because no logical or traditional argument can be advanced for it.

In fact, when the advocates of unanimous election found that unanimity of all votes is difficult they adopted the agreement of the majority as a substitute for unanimity, ignoring the difference of the minority. Also, in such a case, it often happens that the force of fair and foul would correct and incorrect ways turns the flow of the majority opinion in the direction where there is neither individual distinction nor personal merit as a result of which competent persons remain hidden while incompetent individuals stand forwards. When capabilities remain so cubed and personal ends stand in the way as hurdles, how can there be expectation for the election of the correct person. Even if it is assumed that all voters have independent, unbiased views, that no one has his own objective and that none has any other consideration, it is not necessary that every verdict of the majority should be correct and that it cannot go astray. Experience shows that after experiment, the majority has held its own verdict to be wrong. If every verdict of the majority is correct then its first verdict should be wrong because the verdict, which holds it wrong, is also that of the majority. In this circumstance, if the election of the Caliph goes wrong, who would be responsible for the mistake and who should face the blame for the ruination of the Islamic polity. Similarly on whom would be the liability for the bloodshed and slaughter following the turmoil and activity of the elections? When it has been seen that even those who sat in the audience of the Holy Prophet (ص) could not be free of mutual quarrel and strife, how can other avoid it?

If, with a view to avoid mischief, it is left to the people of authority to choose anyone they like, then here too, the same friction and conflict would prevail because here again, convergence of human temperaments on one point is not necessary nor can they be assumed to rise above personal ends. In fact, here the chances of conflict and collision could be stronger because if not all, at least most of them would themselves, be candidates for that status and would not spare any effort to defeat their opponent, creating impediments I his way as best as possible. Its inevitable consequence would be mutual struggle and mischief-mongering. Thus, it would not be possible to ward off the mischief for which this device was adopted and instead of finding a proper individual, the community would just become an instrument for the achievement of personal benefits of the others. Again, what would be the criterion for these people in authority? The same as has usually been, namely whoever collects a few supporters and is able to create commotion in any meeting by use of forceful words would count among the people of authority. Or would capabilities also be judged? If the mode of judging the capabilities is again this very common vote, then the same complications and conflicts would arise here too, to avoid in which this way was adopted. If there is some other standard, then instead of judging the capabilities of the voter by it, why not judge the person who is considered suitable for the status in view. Furthermore, how many persons in authority would be enough to give a verdict? Apparently a verdict once accepted would be precedent for good and the number that would give this verdict would become the criterion for the future. Judge Adud ad-Din al-`Iji writes the following: “Rather, the nomination of one or two individuals by the people in authority is enough because we know that the companions who were strict in religion deemed it enough as the nomination of Abu Bakr by Umar and of Othman by Abd ar-Rahman as we read on p. 351 of Sharh al-Mawaqif.

This is the account of the unanimous election in the Hall of Banu Sa`idah and the activity of the consultative assembly; that is, one man’s action has been given the name of unanimous election and individual’s deed given the name of consultative assembly. Abu Bakr had well understood this reality that election means the vote of the person or two only which is to be attributed to common simple people. That is why he ignored the requirements of unanimous election, majority vote or method of choosing through electoral assembly and appointed `Umar by nomination. Aisha also considered that leaving the question of caliphate to the vote of a few particular individuals means inviting mischief and trouble. She sent a word to `Umar on his death saying:

Do not leave the Islamic community without a chief. Nominate a Caliph for it and leave it not without an authority as; otherwise, I apprehend mischief and trouble.

When the election by those in authority proved futile is was given up and only "might is right" became the criteria, namely whoever subdues others and binds them under his sway and control is accepted as the Caliph of the Prophet (ص) and his true successor. These are those self-adopted principles in the face of which all the Prophet's saying uttered in the "Feast of the relatives," on the night of hijra, at the battle Tabuk, on the occasion of conveying the Quranic chapter Bara'a (Tawba, Ch. 9) and at Ghadir (the swamp of) Khumm. The strange thing is that when each of the first three caliphates is based on one individual's choice, how can this very right to choose be denied to the Prophet (ص) himself, particularly when this was the only way to end all the dissensions, namely that the Prophet (ص) should have himself settled it and saved the community from future disturbances and spared it from leaving this decision I the hands of people who were themselves involved in personal aims and objects. This is the correct procedure which stands to reason and which also has the support of the Prophet's definite sayings.

Hayyan ibn as-Samin al-Hanafi of Yamama was the chief of the tribe Banu Hanifah and the commander of the fortress and the army. Jabir is the name of his younger brother while al-Asha whose real name was Maymun ibn Qays ibn Jandal enjoyed the status of being his bosom friend and led a decent, happy life through his bounty. In this verse, he has compared his current life with the previous one that is the days when he roamed about in search of livelihood and those when he led a happy life in Hayyan's company. Generally, Amir al-Mu'minin's quoting of this verse has been taken to compare this troubled period with the peaceful days passed under the care and protection of the Prophet (ص) when he was free from all sorts of troubles and enjoyed mental peace. But taking into account he occasion for making this comparison and the subject matter of the verse, it would not be far-fetched if it is taken to indicate the difference between the unimportant status of those in power during the Prophet's life time and the authority and power enjoyed by them after him. That is, at one time in the days of the Prophet (ص) no heed was paid to them because of Ali's personality but now the time had so changed that the same people were masters of the affairs of the Muslim world.

When Umar was wounded by Abu Lulu'ah and he saw that it was difficult for him to survive because of the deep wound, he formed a

consultative committee and nominated Ali (ع) ibn Abu Talib, `Othman ibn Affan, Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf, az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas and Talhah ibn Ubaydillah. Then, he bound them that after three days of his death, they should select one of themselves as the Caliph while for those three days Suhayb should act as Caliph. On receipt of these instructions, some members of the committee requested him to indicate what ideas he had about each of them to enable them to proceed further in their light. Umar, therefore, disclosed his own view about each individual. He said that Sa`d is harsh-tempered and hot-headed; `Abd ar-Rahman was Pharaoh of the community; as-Zubayr was, if pleased, a true believer, but if displeased, an un-believer; Talhah was the embodiment of pride and haughtiness and if he was made caliph, he would put the ring of the caliphate on his wife's finger while Othman did not see beyond his kinsmen. As regarding Ali (ع), he is enamored of the Caliphate although I know that he alone can run it on the right lines. Nevertheless, despite this admission, he thought it necessary to constitute the consultative committee and in selecting its members and laying down the working procedure, he made sure that the Caliphate would take the direction in which he wished to turn it. Thus, a man of ordinary prudence can draw the conclusion that all the factors for `Othman's success were present the rein. If we look at its members, we see that one of the them, namely Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf is the husband of Othman's sister, next Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas besides bearing malice towards Ali (ع) is a relative and kinsman of Abd ar-Rahman. Neither of them can be taken to go against `Utham. The third, Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah about who Professor Muhammad Abdo writes in this annotation on Nahjul-Balagha:

Talhah was inclined towards Othman and the reason for it was no less than that he was against Ali because he himself was an At-Taymi' and Abu Bakr's accession to the caliphate had created bad blood between Banu Taym and Banu Hashim.

As regarding az-Zubayr, even if he had voted for Ali what could his single vote achieve. According to al-Tabari's statement, Talhah was not present in Medina at that time, but his absence did not stand in the way of `Othman's success. Rather, even if he were present, was reached at themeeting (of the Committee) and he was taken to be Ali's supporter, still there could be no doubt in Othman's success because Omer's sagacious mind had set the working procedure that:

If two agree about one and the other two about another then Abdullah bin Umar should act as the arbitrator. The group whom he

orders should choose the Caliph from among themselves. If they do not accept Abdullah ibn `Omer's verdict, support should be given to the group which includes Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf, but if the others do not agree they should be beheaded for opposing this verdict.[117]

Here, the disagreement with the verdict of Abdullah ibn Umar has no meaning since he was directed to support the group which included Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf. He had ordered his son Abdullah and Suhayb that:

If the people differ, you should side with themajority, but if three of them are on one side and the other three on the other, you should side with the group including Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf as we see in al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 2725, 2789; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, pp. 51, 67.

In this instruction, the agreement with themajority also means support of Abd ar-Rahman because themajority could not be on any other side since fifty blood-thirsty swords had been put on the heads of the opposition group with orders to fall on their heads on Abd ar-Rahman's behest. Amir al-Mu'minin's eye had foreseen it at that very moment that the caliphate was going to Othman as appears from his following words which he spoke to Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib: "The Caliphate has been turned away from us." Al-Abbas asked how he could know it. He replied, "`Othman has also been coupled with me and it has been laid down that the majority should be supported; but if two agree on one and two on the other, then support should be given to the group which includes `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf." Now Sa`d will support his cousin Abd ar-Rahman who is of course, the husband of Othman's sister according to the same reference cited above.

However, after Omer's death, this meeting took place in the room of Aisha and on its door stood Abu Talhah al-Ansari with fifty men having drawn swords in their hands. Talhad started the proceedings and inviting all others to be witness said hat he gave his right of vote to Othman. This touched az-Zubayr's sense of honor as his mother, Safiyya daughter of Abdul-Muttalib, was the sister of the Prophet's father. So, he gave his right of vote to Ali. Thereafter, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas made his right of vote to Abd ar-Rahman. This left three members of the consultative committee out of whom Abd ar-Rahman said that he was willing to give up his own right of vote if Ali (ع) and Othman gave him

[117]al-Tabari, Vol. 1 pp. 2779-80; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, p. 67.

the right to choose one of them or one of these two should acquire this right by withdrawing. This was a trap in which Ali had been entangled from all sides, namely that either he should abandon his own right or else allow Abd ar-Rahman to do as he wished. The first case was not possible for him; that is, to give up his own right and elect Othman or Abd ar-Rahman. So, he clung to his right, while Abd ar-Rahman, separating himself from it, assumed this power and said to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), AI pay you allegiance on your following the Book of Allah, the Sunnah (teachings) of the Prophet (ص) and the conduct of the two Shaikhs (Abu Bakr and Umar). Ali (ع) replied, "Rather on following the book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Prophet (ص) and my own findings. When Abd ar-Rahman got the same reply even after repeating the question thrice, he turned to Othman saying, "Do you accept these conditions?" `Othman had no reason to refuse and so he agreed to the conditions and allegiance was paid to him. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) saw his rights being trampled, he said: "This is not the first day when you behaved against us. I have only to keep good patience. Allah is the Helper against whatever you say. By Allah, you have not made Othman caliph but in hope that he would give back the caliphate to you."

After recording the events of the shura (consultative committee), Ibn Abul-Hadid has written that when allegiance had been paid to Othman, Ali (ع) addressed Othman and Abd ar-Rahman saying, "May Allah sow the seed of dissension among you, and so it happened that each turned a bitter enemy of the other and Abd ar-Rahman did not ever after speak to Othman till death. Even on his deathbed, he turned his face on him.

On seeing these events, the question arises whether shura (consultative committee) means confining the matter to six persons, thereafter to three and finally to one only. Also, whether the condition of following the conduct of the two Shaikhs [Abu Bakr and Umar] for caliphate was put by Umar or it was just a hurdle put by Abd ar-Rahman between Ali (ع) and the caliphate, although the first caliph did not put forth this condition at the time of nominating the second caliph, namely that he should follow the former's footsteps. What then, was the occasion for this condition here?

However, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had agreed to participate in it in order to avoid mischief and to put an end to arguing so that others should be silenced and should not be able to claim that they would have voted in

his favor and that he, himself, evaded the consultative committee and did not give them an opportunity of selecting him.

About the reign of the third caliph [Othman ibn Affan], Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says that soon on Othman's coming to power Banu Umayyah got ground and began plundering the bayt al-mal) (public fund) and just as cattle on seeing green grass after a drought trampled it away, they recklessly feel upon Allah's money and devoured it. At last, this self-indulgence and nepotism brought him to the stage when people besieged his house, put him to the sword and made him vomit all that he had swallowed.

The mis-administration that took place in this period was such that no Muslim can remain unmoved to see that companions of high status were lying without anyone to care for them, they were stricken with poverty and surrounded by bankruptcy while control over bayt al-mal (public fund) was that of Banu Umayyah, government positions were occupied by their young and inexperienced persons, special Muslim properties were owned by them, meadows provided grazing but to their cattle, houses were built but by them and orchards were but for them. If any compassionate person spoke about these excesses, his ribs were broken and if someone agitated this capitalism, he was expelled from the city. The uses to which zakat (poor-rate) and charities which were meant for the poor and the wretched and the public fund which was the common property of the Muslims were put may be observed from the following few illustrations:

1) Al-Hakam ibn Abul-As who had been exiled form Medina by the Prophet (ص), was allowed back in the city, not only against the Prophet's Sunnah (teachings) but also against the conduct of the first two Caliphs. He was paid three hundred thousand dirhams form the public fund. (Ansab al-Ashraf, Vol. 5, pp. 27, 28, 125)

2) Al-Walid ibn Uqbah, who has been naed hypocrite in the Holy Quran, was piad one hundred thousand Dirhams from the Muslims' public fund (Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 3, p. 94).

3) The caliph married his own daughter, Umm Aban, to Marwan ibn al-Hakam and paid him one hundred thousand dirhams for the public fund (Sharh of Iban Abul-Hadid, Vol. 1, pp. 198-199).

4) He married his daughter Aisha to Harith ibn al-Hakam and granted him one hundred thousand dirhams for the public fund (Ibid.).

5) Abdullah ibn Khalid was paid four hundred dirhams as we read on p. 84 of Al-Ma'arif of Ibn Qutaybah.

6) He allowed the khums (one-fifth religious tax) from Africa (amounting) to five hundred thousand dīnars to Marwan ibn al-Hakam, according to the same reference.

7) Fadak, which was withheld from the angelic daughter of the Prophet (ص) on the ground of being general charity, was given as a royal favor to Marwan ibn al-Hakam. See the same reference cited above.

8) Mahzur, a place in the commercial area of Medina which had been declared, "public trust by the Prophet (ص), was gifted to Harith ibn al-Hakam, according to the same reference.

9) In the meadows around Medina, no camel except those of Banu Umayyah were allowed to graze, as we read in the Sharh of Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 1, p. 199.

10) After his Othman's death, one hundred and fifty thousand dinars (gold coins) and one million Dirhams (silver coins) were found in his house. There was no limit to tax-free lands and the total value of the land estate he owned in Wadi al-Qura and Hunain was one hundred thousand dinars. There were countless camels and horses. according to Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. 1, p.435.

11) the Caliph's relatives ruled all the principal cities. Thus, at Kufa, al-Walid ibn `Uqbah was the governor, but when in the state of intoxication of wine, he led the morning prayer in four instead of two rak'ah. People were agitated and demanded his removal, but the Caliph put in his place a hypocrite like Sa'id ibn al-As. In Egypt, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abu Sarh, in Syria Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan and in Basra, Abdullah ibn Amir were the governors appointed by him (ibid).

Sermon 4

Amir Al-Mu'minin's Far-Sightedness and Staunch Conviction

Through us you got guidance in the darkness and secured a high status. And through us you got out of the gloomy night. The ears which do not listen to the cries may become deaf. How can one who remained deaf to the loud cries (of the Holy Quran and the Prophet [ص]) listen to (my) feeble voice. The heart that has ever palpitated (with fear of Allah) may get peace.

I always apprehended from you consequences of treachery and I had seen you through in the garb of the deceitful. The curtain of the religion had kept me hidden from you but the truth of my intentions disclosed you to me. I stood for you on the path of truth among misleading tracks were you met each other, but there was no leader and you dug but got no water.

Today, I am making these dumb things peak to you (i.e. my suggestive ideas and deep musing, etc.) which are full of descriptive power. The opinion of the person who abandons me may get astray. I have never doubted the truth since it was shown to me. Musa (Moses)[118] did not entertain fear for his own self. Rather, he feared the mastery of the ignorant and the path towards deviation. Nowadays, we stand on the crossroads of truth and falsehood. The one who is sure of getting water feels no thirst.

Amir al-Mu'minin says that the ground for Moses' fear was not that since he saw ropes and sticks moving he might have entertained fear for his life, but the cause of his fear was lest people be impressed with this sorcery and get astray and untruth might prevail on account of this craft. That is why Moses was not consoled by saying that his life was safe but by saying that he would prove superior and his claim would be upheld. Since his fear was for the defeat of the truth and victory of falsehood, not for his own life, the consideration was given to him for the victory of truth and not for the protection of his life.

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) also means that he too, had the same fear meaning that the people should not be caught in the trap of these (Talhah,

[118]The reference refers to Moses when sorcerers were sent for to confront him and they demonstrated their sorcery by throwing ropes and sticks on the ground and Moses felt afraid. Thus, the Holy Quran records: "It seemed to him (Moses), by their sorcery as if they were running. Then Moses felt in himself a fear. We said: Fear not! Verily, you are the uppermost (20: 66-68).

az-Zubayr, etc.) and fall into misguidance by getting astray from the true faith. otherwise, he himself never feared for his own life.

Sermon 5

Delivered when the Holy Prophet (ص) died and Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib and Abu Sufyan ibn Harb offered to swear allegiance to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) as the Caliph

O People![119]

Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance, turn away from the path of dissension and put off the gowns of pride. Prosperous is one who rises with wings (i.e. when he has power) or else he remains peaceful and others enjoy ease. It (i.e. The aspiration for Caliphate) is like turbid water or like a morsel that would suffocate the

[119]When the Holy Prophet (ص) died, Abu Sufyan was not in Medina. He was coming back when on his way he got the news of this tragedy. At once, he inquired who had become the leader the chief. He was told that people had paid allegiance to Abu Bakr. On hearing this, the acknowledged mischief-monger of Arabia went into deep thought and eventually went to Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib with a proposal. He said to him, "Look! These people have by contrivance handed over the Caliphate to the Taym and deprived Banu Hashim of it for good. And, after himself, this man will place over our heads a haughty man from Banu Adiy. Let us go to Ali bin Abu Talib (ع) and ask him to get out of his house and take arms to secure his right." So, taking Abbas with him, he went to Ali (ع) and said: "Give me your hand. I pledge allegiance to you, and if anyone rises in opposition, I will fill the streets of Medina with men of cavalry and infantry." This was the most delicate moment for Amir al-Mu'minin (ع). He regarded himself as the true master and successor of the Prophet (ص), while a man with the backing of a tribe such as that of Abu Sufyan was ready to support him. Just a signal was enough to ignite the flames of war. But Amir al-Mu'minin's foresight and right judgment saved the Muslims from civil war as his piercing eyes perceived that this man wanted to start a civil war by rousing the passions of tribal partisanship and distinction of birth so that Islam would be struck with a convulsion that would shake it to its roots. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), therefore, rejected his counsel and admonished him several and spoke forth the words, whereby he had stopped people form mischief-mongering and undue conceit. He declared his stand to be, for him, there were only two coursesCeither take up arms or sit quietly at home. If he rose for war, there were no supporters so that he could suppress the rising insurgence. The only course left was to quietly wait for the opportunity until circumstances were favorable.

person who swallows it. One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another's field.

If I speak out they would call me greedy towards power, but if I keep quiet they would say I was afraid of death. It is a pity that after all the ups and downs (I have been through). By Allah, the son of Abu Talib[120] is more familiar with death than an infant with the breast of its mother. I have hidden knowledge; if I disclose it you will start trembling like ropes in deep wells.

Amir al-Mu'minin's calm at this stage was indicative of his high policy and far-sightedness because if in those circumstances Medina had become the center of war, its fire would have engulfed the whole of Arabia in its flames. The discord and scuffle that had already begun among the Muhajirun and the ansar would have increased to maximum, the wire-pulling of the hypocrites would have had full play and Islam's ship would have been caught in such a whirlpool that its balancing would have been difficult. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) suffered trouble and tribulations, but did not raise his hands. History is witness that during his life at Mecca, the Prophet (ص) suffered all sorts of troubles but he was not prepared to clash or struggle by abandoning patience and endurance because he realized that if war took place at that stage the way for Islam's growth and fruition would be closed. Of course, when he had collected supporters and helpers enough to suppress the flood of unbelief and curb

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[120]About the death, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says that it is so dear to him that even an infant does not so love to leap towards the source of its nourishment while in its mother's lap. An infant's attachment with the breast of its mother is under the effect of a natural impulse, but the dictates of natural impulses change with the advance of age. When the limited period of infancy ends and the infant's temperament changes, he does not like to even look at what was so familiar to him but rather turns his face from it in disgust. But, the love of prophets and saints for union with Allah is mental and spiritual and mental and spiritual feelings do not change, nor does weakness or decay occur in them. Since death is the means and first rung toward this goal, their love for death increases to such an extent that its rigors become the cause of pleasure for them and its bitterness proves to be the source of delight for their taste. Their love for it is the same as that of the thirsty for the well or that of a lost passenger for his goal. Thus, when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was wounded by Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muljim's fatal attack, he said, "I was but like the walker who has reached (the goal) or like the seeker who has found (his object) and whatever is with Allah is good for the pious. The Prophet (ص) also said that there is no pleasure for a believer other than union with Allah.

the disturbances, he rose to face the enemy. Similarly, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), treating the life of the Prophet (ص) as a torch for his guidance, refrained from exhibiting the power of his arm because he was realizing that rising against the enemy without helpers and supporter would become a source of rebellion and defeat instead of success and victory. Therefore, on this occasion, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has likened the desire for Caliphate to turbid water or a morsel suffocating the throat. Thus, even where people had forcibly snatched this morsel and wanted to swallow it by forcible thrusting, it got stuck in their throat. They could neither swallow it nor vomit it out. That is, they could neither manage it as is apparent from the blunders they committed in connection with Islamic injunctions, nor were they ready to cast off the knot from their neck.

He reiterated the same ideas in different words thus; "Had I attempted to pluck the unripe fruit of Caliphate, then by this the orchard would have been desolated and I, too, would have achieved nothing, like these people who cultivate on other's land but can neither guard it, nor water it at the proper time, nor reap any crop from it. The status of these people is that if I ask them to vacate it so that the owner should cultivate it himself and protect it, they say how greedy I am, while if I keep quiet they think I am afraid of death. They should tell me on what occasion did I ever feel afraid, or flew from a battlefield for my life, whereas every small or big encounter is proof of my bravery and a witness to may daring and courage. He who plays with swords and strikes against hillocks is not afraid of death. I am so familiar with death that even an infant is not so familiar with the breast of its mother. Hark! The reason for my silence is the knowledge that the Prophet (ص) has put in my bosom. If I divulge it you would get perplexed and bewildered. Let some days pass and you would know the reason of my inaction and perceive with your own eyes what sort of people would appear on this scene under the name of Islam and what destruction they would bring about. My silence is because this would happen, otherwise, it is not silence without reason."

A Persian axiom says the following: "Silence has a meaning which cannot be couched in words."

Sermon 6

Delivered on being advised not to chase Talhah ibn Ubaydillah and az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam for fighting. [121]

By Allah, I shall not be like the badger, which feigns sleep on the continuous (sound of) stone-throwing till he who is in search of it find it or he who is on the look out for it overpowers it. Rather, I shall ever strike the deviators from truth with the help of those who advance toward it and the sinner and doubters with the help of those who listen to me and obey, till my day (of death) comes. By Allah, I have been continually deprived of my right from the day the Prophet (ص) died until today.

Sermon 7

About the Hypocrites

They[122] have made Satan the master of their affairs and he has taken them as partners. He has laid eggs and hatched them in their

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[121]When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) showed intention to chase Talhah and az-Zubayr, he was advised to leave them on their own lest he received some harm from them. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) uttered these words in reply, the sum total whereof is: "How long can I be mere spectator to my right being snatched and keep quiet. Now, so long as I have the breath of life, I shall fight them and make them suffer the consequences of their conduct. They should not think that I can be easy over-powered like the badger. Its nicknames are: "Umm Amir" and "Umm Tariq". It is also called "the glutton" because it swallows everything and eats up whatever it gets as if several bellies were contained in one and it does not have its fill. It is also called Na`thal. It is a very simply and silly animal. Its slyness is apparent from the way it is easily caught. It is said that the hunter surrounds its den and strikes it with his foot or a stick and calls out softly, ABow your head, Umm Tariq, conceal yourself, Umm Amir. On repeating this sentence, while patting the ground, it conceals itself in a corner of the den. Then, the hunter says, "Umm Amir is not in its den; it is sleeping." On hearing this, it stretches its limbs and pretends it is asleep. The hunter then puts the knot in its feet and drags it out and it falls like a coward into his hand without resistance.

[122]Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says about the hypocrites (i.e. Those who opposed him before the during his Caliphate) that they are partners in action of Satan and his helpers and supporters. He too, has befriended them so much that he has made his abode with them, resides on their bosoms, lays eggs and hatches young one from

bosoms. He creeps and crawls in their laps. He sees through their eyes and speaks with their tongues. In this way, he has led them to sinfulness and adorned for them foul things like the action of one whom Satan has made partner in his domain and speaks untruth through his tongue.

Sermon 8

About Az-Zubayr at a Time For Which it Was Appropriate

He asserts that he swore allegiance to me with his hand, but did not swear with his heart.[123]

So he does admit allegiance. In regards to his claiming it with his heart he should come forward with a clear argument for it. otherwise, he should return to wherefrom he has gone out.[124]

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them the re, while these young ones jump and play in their laps without demur. He means that Satanic evil ideas take birth in their bosoms and grow and thrive the re. There is no restrain on them, nor restriction of any kind. He has permeated their blood and mingled their spirit so that both have become completely unified. Now, the eyes are theirs but the sight is his, the tongue is theirs but he words are his and the Prophet (ص) has said, "Verily, Stan permeates the progeny of Adam like blood. That is, just as the circulation of blood does not stop, the same way, the quick succession of Satan's evil ideas knows no break and he draws man toward evil in sleep in wakefulness and in every posture, rising or sitting. He so paints them with his dye that their word and action reflect an exact portrait of his word and action. Those whose bosoms shine with the glory of faith prevent such evil ideas but some are already ready to welcome those evils and these are the persons who, under the garb of Islam, are after the advancement of heresy.

[123]After swearing allegiance on the hand of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam broke the allegiance. Then sometimes he put forth the excuse that he was forced to swear allegiance and that forced allegiance is no allegiance and sometimes, he said that allegiance was only for show. His heart did not go in accord to it. As though he himself admitted with his tongue the duplicity of his outer appearance and inner self. But this excuse is like that of the one who reverts to apostasy after adopting Islam and to avoid penalty may say that he had accepted Islam only by the tongue, not in the heart. Obviously, such an excuse cannot be heard nor can avoid punishment. If az-Zubayr suspected that Othman was slain at insistence of Amir al-Mu'minin, this suspicion should have existed when he was taking the oath for obedience and stretching his hand for allegiance, not now that his expectations were getting frustrated and hopes had started dawning from somewhere else.

Sermon 9

Cowardice of the people of Jamal

They[125] thunder like clouds and shone like lightening but despite both these things they exhibited cowardice while we do not thunder till we pounce upon the foe nor do we show flow (of words) until we have virtually rained.

Sermon 10

About Talhah and az-Zubayr [126]

Beware! Satan has collected his group and assembled his horsemen and foot soldiers. Surely, with me is my sagacity. I have neither deceived myself nor ever been deceived. By Allah, I shall fill to the brim

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[124]Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has rejected his claim in short form. Thus, when he admits that his hands had paid allegiance then until there is justification for breaking of the allegiance he should stick to it. But, if, according to him his heart was not in accord with it, he should produce other proof for it. Since proof about the state of heart cannot be adduced how can he bring such proof and an assertion without proof is unacceptable to his mind.

[125]About the people of Jamal (i.e. The enemy in the Battle of Jamal) Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says that they rose thundering, shouting and stampeding but when encounter took place they were seen flying like straw. At one time, they made loud claims that they would do this and that and now they showed such cowardice as to flee from the battlefield. About himself, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says, "We do not threaten the enemy before battle, nor utter boasts, nor terrorize the enemy by raising unnecessary cries because it is not the way of the brave to use the tongue instead of the hand. That is why on this occasion, he said to his comrades, "Beware of excessive talk as it is cowardice."

[126]When Talhah and az-Zubayr broke away by violating the oath of allegiance and set for Basra in the company of Aisha, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) spoke in these words which are part of the long speech. Ibn Abul-Hadid has written that in this sermon Satan denotes the real Satan as well as Mu`awiyah because Mu`awiyah was secretly conspiring the Talhah and az-Zubayr and instigating them to fight against Amir al-Mu'minin (ع); but the reference to the real Satan is more appropriate, obvious and in accord with the situation and circumstances.

for them a cistern from which I alone would draw water. They can neither turn away from it nor return to it.

Sermon 11

Delivered during the Battle of Jamal when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) gave the standard to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya

Mountains [2] may move from their status, but you should not move from yours. Grit your teeth. Lend to Allah your head (in fighting for Allah, give yourself to Allah). Plant your feet firmly on the ground. Have your eye on the remotest foe and close your eyes (to their numberical majority). And be sure that succor is but from Allah, the Glorified.

Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya was Amir al-Mu'minin's son but called Ibn Hanafiyya after his mother. His mother's name was Khawla daughter of Ja`far. She was known as Hanafiyya after her tribe Banu Hanifah. When people of Yamama were declared, "postates for refusing to pay zakat (religious tax) and were killed and the women were brought to Medina as slave girls, this lady also came to Medina with them. When her tribesmen came to know it they approached Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and requested him to save her from the blemish of slavery and protect her family honor and prestige. Consequently, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) purchased her, set her free and married her where after, Muhammad (ص) was born.

Most historians have written his surname as Abul-Qasim. Thus, the author of Al-Isti'ab (Vol. 3. pp. 1366-1368, 1370-1372) has narrated the opinion of Abu Rashīd ibn Hafs az-Zuhri that from among the sons of the companions (of the Prophet [ص]) he came across four individuals everyone of whom was named Muhammad and surnamed Abul-Qasim, namely (1) Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, (2) Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr (3) Muhammad ibn Talhah and (4) Muhammad ibn Sa`d. After this he writes that Muhammad ibn Talhah's name and surname were given by the Prophet (ص). Al-Waqidi writes that the name of surname of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was suggested by Aisha. Apparently the Holy Prophet's giving the name of Muhammad ibn Talhah seems incorrect since from some traditions it appears that the Prophet (ص) had reserved it for a son of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and he was Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya.

As regarding his surname it is said that the Prophet (ص) had particularized it and that he had told Ali that a son would be born to you after me and I have given him my name and surname and after that it is not permissible for anyone in my people to have this name and surname together.

With this opinion before us, how can it be correct that the Prophet (ص) had given this very name and surname to anyone else since particularization means that no one else would share it. Moreover, some people have recorded the surname of Ibn Talhah as Abu Sulayman instead of Abul-Qasim and this further confirms our viewpoint. Similarly, if the surname of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was on the ground that his son's name was Qasim, who was among the theologians of Medians, then what is the sense in Aisha having suggested it. If she had suggested it along with the name, how could Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr tolerate it later on since having been brought up under the care of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) the Prophet's saying could not remain concealed form him. Moreover, most people have recorded his surname as Abu Abd ar-Rahman, which weakens the view of Abu Rashid.

Let alone these people's surname being Abul-Qoim, even for ibn al-Hanafiyya this surname is not proved. Although ibn Khallikan (in Wafiyyat al-A'yan, Vol. 4, p. 170) has taken that some of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) for whom the Prophet (ص) had particularized this surname to be Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, yet allama al-Mamaqani (in Tanqih al-Maqal, Vol. 3, Part 1, p. 112) writes the following:

In applying this tradition to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, Ibn Khallikan has got into confusion because the son of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) whom the Prophet's name and surname together have been gifted by the Prophet (ص) and which is not permissible to be given to any one else, is to the awaited last Imam (may our lives be his ransom) and not to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, nor is the surname Abul-Qasim established for him, rather some of the Sunnis being ignorant of the real intention of the Prophet (ص), have taken to mean Ibn al-Hanafiyya.

However, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya was prominent in righteousness and piety, sublime in renunciation and worship, lofty in knowledge and achievements and heir of his father in bravery. His performance in the Battle of Jamal and Siffin had created such impression among the Arabs that even warriors of consequence trembled at this

name. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) too was proud of his courage and valor and always placed him forward in encounters. Shaikh al-Baha'i has written in al-Kashkul that Ali ibn Abu Talib kept him abreast in the battles and did not allow Hassan and Hussain to go ahead and used to say, "He is my son while these two are sons of the Prophet of Allah (ص). When a Kharijite said to ibn al-Hanafiyya that Ali thrust him into the flames of war but saved away Hassan and Hussain (ع), he replied that he himself was like the right hand and Hassan and Hussain (ع) like Ali's two eyes and that Ali protected his eyes with his right hand. But Allama al-Mamaqani has written in Tanqih al-Maqal that his was not the reply of Ibn al-Hanafiyya, but of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) himself. When during the battle of Siffin Muhammad mentioned this matter to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) in a complaining tone, he replied, "You are my right hand whereas they are my eyes and the hand should protect the eyes.

Apparently it seems that first Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) must have given this reply and thereafter someone might have mentioned it to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya and he must have repeated the same reply as there could not be a more eloquent reply than this one and its eloquence confirms the view that it was originally the outcome of the eloquent tongue of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and was later appropriated by Muhammad (ص) al-Hanafiyya. Consequently, both these views can be held to be correct and there is no incongruity between them. However, he was bo5rn in the reign of the second Caliph and died in the reign of Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan at the age of sixty-five years. Some writers have recorded the year of his death as 80 A.H. And others as 81 A.H. There is a difference about the place of his death as well. Some have put it as Medina, some Aylah and some Ta'if.

2. When in the Battle of Jamal Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya to the battle field, he told him that he should fix himself before the enemy like the mountain of determination and resolution so that the onslaught of the army should not be able to displace him and he should charge the enemy with closed teeth because by pressing the teeth over the teeth, tension occurs in the nerves of the skull. As a result of which the stroke of the sword goes amiss as he said at another place, "Press together your teeth. It sends amiss the edge of the sword." Then he says, "My child, lend your head to Allih in order that you may be able to achieve eternal life in place of this one because for a lent article there is the right to get it back. Therefore, you should fight

being heedless of your life; otherwise, also if your mind clings to life, you will hesitate to advance toward deathly encounters and that would fall upon your reputation of bravery. Look, do not let your steps falter because the enemy is emboldened at the faltering of steps and faltering steps fastens the feet of the enemy. Keep the last lines of the enemy as your aim so that the enemy may be overawed with loftiness of your intentions and you may feel ease in tearing through their lives and their movement should also not remain concealed form you. Look, do not pay heed to their superiority in numbers, otherwise, your valor and courage would suffer." This statement can also mean that one should open the eyes wide to be dazzled by the shining of weapons and the enemy may make at attack by taking advantage of the situation. Also, always bear in mind that victory is from Allah. "If Allah helps you, no one can overpower you." Therefore, instead of relying on material means, seek His support and succor.

Remember O Believers! If Allah helps you, none shall overcome you (Holy Quran, 3: 159).

Sermon 12

When Allah gave Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) victory over the enemy at the Battle of Jamal one of his comrades said on that occasion, AI wish my brother so-and-so had been present so that he, too, would have seen what success and victory Allah had given you. It was then that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) asked him, "Did you brother hold me as a friend?" The comrade said, "Yes." Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "In that case, he was with us. Rather, in this army of ours, even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and in the wombs of women. Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them."

If a person falls short in his actions, despite might and means, this would be indicative of the weakness of his will. But if there is an impediment in the way of action or his life comes to an end as a result of which his action remains incomplete, then in that case Allah would not deprive him of the reward on the basis that actions are judged by intention. Since his intention in any case was to perform the action, therefore, he should deserve reward to some extent.

In the case of action, there may be absence of reward because action can involve show or pretense but intention is hidden in the depth of the heart. It can have not a jot of show or affectation. The intention would remain at the same level of frankness, truth, perfection and correctness

where it is, even though there may be no action due to some impediment. Even if there is no occasion for forming intention but there is passion and zeal in the heart, a man would deserve reward on the basis of his heart's feelings. This is to what Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has alluded to in this sermon, namely that "If your brother loved me, he would share the reward with those who secured martyrdom for our support."

Sermon 13

Condemning the People of Basra

You were the army of a woman and in the command of a quadruped. When it grumbled you responded and when it was wounded (hamstrung) you fled away. Your character is low and your pledge is broken. Your faith is hypocrisy. Your water is brackish. He who stays with you is laden with sins and he who forsakes you secures Allah's mercy. As though I see your mosque prominent, resembling the surface of a boat, while Allah has sent chastisement from above and from below it and everyone who is on it is drowned.

Another version of the same sermon:

By Allah! Your city would certainly be drowned so much so that as though I see its mosque like the upper part of a boat or a sitting ostrich (or, in another version of his statement) like the bosom of a bird in the deep sea.

Yet Another Version States the Following:

Your city is the most stinking of all the cities as regarding its clay, the nearest to water and remotest from the sky. It contains nine tenths of evil. He who enters it is surrounded with his sins and he who is out of it enjoys Allah's forgiveness. It seems as though I look at this habitation of yours that water has so engulfed it that nothing can be seen of it except the highest part of the mosque appearing like the bosom of a bird in the deep sea.

Ibn Maytham writes that when the Battle of Jamal ended, three days thereafter, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said the morning prayer in the central mosque of Basra. After finished it he stood on the right side of the prayer place reclining against the wall and delivered this sermon wherein he described the lowness of character of the people of Basra and they

slyness, namely that they got inflamed at others' instigation without anyone of their own and making over their command to a woman clung to a camel. They broke away after swearing allegiance and exhibited their low character and evil nature by being double-faced. In this sermon, the woman implies Aisha and the quadruped implies the camel (Jamal) after which this battle has been named the Battle of the Jamal. This battle originated in this way. During the lifetime of Othman, Aisha used to oppose him and had left for Mecca leaving him in siege and as such, she had a share in his assassination details of which would be stated at some suitable place but when on her return from Mecca toward Medina, she heard from Abdullah ibn Salamah that Othman's allegiance had been paid to Ali (as Caliph) she suddenly exclaimed, "If allegiance has been paid to Ali, I wish the sky had burst on the earth. Let me go back to Mecca." Consequently, she decided to return to Mecca and began saying, "By Allah, Othman has been helplessly killed. I shall certainly avenge his blood." On seeing this wide change in the state of affairs, Abu Salamah said, "What are you saying as you yourself used to say 'Kill this Na'thal; he had turned unbeliever'." Thereupon, she replied, "Not only I but everyone used to say so; but leave these things and listen to what I am now saying, that is better and deserves more attention. It is so strange that first he was called upon to repent but before giving him an opportunity to do so, he has been killed." On this Abu Salamah recited the following verses addressing her:

You started it and now you are changing and raising storms of wind and rain. You ordered for his killing and told us that he had turned unbeliever. We admit that he has been killed but under your orders and the real killer is the one who ordered it. Nevertheless, neither the sky fell over us not did the sun and moon fall into eclipse. Certainly people have paid allegiance to one who can ward off the enemy with power and grandeur, does not allow swords to come near him and loosens the twist of the rope, that is, subdues his enemy. He is always fully armed for combat and the faithful is never like the traitor.

However, when she reached Mecca with a passion for vengeance she began rousing the people to avenge Othman's blood by circulating stories of his having been victimized. The first to respond to this call was Abdullah ibn Amir al-Hadrami, who had been the governor of Mecca in Othman's reign and with him Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa'id ibn al-As and other Umayyads rose to support her. On the other side, Talhah ibn Ubaydillah and az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam also reached Mecca from Medina. From Yemen Ya`li ibn Munabbih who had been governor there during Othman's caliphate and the former governor of Basra, Abdullah

ibn Amir ibn Kurayz also reached there and joining together began preparing their plans. The battle had been decided upon but the discussion was about he venue of confrontation. Aisha's opinion was to make Medina the venue of the battle but some people opposed and held that it was difficult to deal with Medinites and that some other place should be chose as the venue. At last after much discussion it was decided to march towards Basra as there was no dearth of men to support the cause. Consequently on the strength of Abdullah ibn Amir's countless wealth and the offer of six hundred thousand Dirhams and six hundred camels by Ya`li ibn Munabbih they prepared any army of three thousand and set off to Basra. There was a small incident on the way of account of which Aisha refused to advance further. What happened was that at a place she heard the barking of dogs and inquired from the camel driver the name of the place. He said it was Haw'ab. On hearing this name, she recalled the Prophet's admonition when he ha said to his wives, AI wish I could know at which of you the dogs of Haw'ab would bark. So when she realized that she herself was the one, she got the camel seated by patting and expressed her intention to abandon themarch. But the device of her companions saved the deteriorating situation. Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr swore to assure her that it was not Haw'ab, Talhah seconded him and for her further assurance, also sent for fifty persons to testify to it. When all of the people were on one side, what could a single woman do by opposing. Eventually they were successful and Aisha resumed her forward march with the same enthusiasm.

When this army reached Basra, people were first amazed to see the riding animal of Aisha. Jariyah ibn Qudamah came forward and said, "O, Mother of the faithful, the assassination of `Othman was one tragedy but the greater tragedy is that you have come out on this cursed camel and ruined your honor and esteem. It is better that you should get back. But since neither the incident at Haw'ab could deter her nor could the Quranic injunction: "Keep sitting in your houses (33: 33) stop her," what effect could these voices produce. Consequently, she disregarded all of this.

When the army tried to enter the city, the governor of Basra Othman ibn Hunayf came forward to stop them and when the two parties came face-to-face, they drew their swords out of the sheaths and pounced upon each other. When a good number had been killed from either side, Aisha intervened on the basis of her influence and the two groups agreed that until the arrival of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), the existing administration should continue and Othman ibn Hunayf should continue on his post. But only two days had elapsed when they made a nightly attack on Othman ibn Hunayf, killed forty innocent persons, beat Othman ibn Hunayf,

plucked every hair of his bread, took him in their custody and shut him u, p. Then they attacked the public treasury and while ransacking it, killed twenty persons on the spot and beheaded fifty more after arresting them. Then they attacked the grain store whereupon an elderly noble of Basra, Hukaym ibn Jabalah, could not control himself and reaching there with his men said to Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, ASpare some of this grain for the city's populace. After all there should be a limit to oppression. You have spread killing and destruction all around and put Othman ibn Hunayf in confinement. For Allah's sake, keep off these ruining activities and release Othman ibn Hunayf. Is there no fear of Allah in your hearts? ibn az-Zubayr said, "This is vengeance of Othman's life. Hukaym ibn Jabalah retorted, AWere those who have been killed assassins of Othman? By Allah, if I had supporters and comrades I should have certainly avenged the blood of these Muslims whom you have killed without reason. Ibn az-Zubayr replied, "We shall not give anything out of this grain, nor will Othman ibn Hunayf be released. At last, the battle raged between these two parties but how could a few individuals deal with such a big force? the result was the Hukaym ibn Jabalah, his son al-Ashraf ibn Hukaym ibn Jabalah, his brother ar-Ri'l ibn Jabalah and seventy persons of his tribe were killed. In short, killing and looting prevailed all around. Neither anyone's life was secure nor was there any way to save one' honor or property.

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was informed of themarch to Basra, he set out to stop it with a force which consisted of seventy of those who had taken part in the battle of Badr and four hundred out of those companions who had the honor of being present at the Allegiance of Ridwan (The Divine Pleasure). When he stopped at the stage of Khaqar, he sent his son Hassan (ع) and "`Ammar ibn Yasir to Kufa to invite its people to fighting." Consequently, despite interference of Abu Musa al-Ash`ari seven thousand combatants from there joined Amir al-Mu'minin's army. He left that place after placing the army under various commanders. Eye witnesses state that when his force reached near Basra first of all a contingent of Ansar appeared foremost. Its standard was held by Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. After it appeared, another contingent of 1,000 whose commander was Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari. Then another contingent came in sight. Its standard was borne by Abu Qatadah ibn ar-Rabi'. Then a crowd of a thousand old and young persons was seen. They had signs of prostration on their foreheads and veils of fear of Allah on their face. It seemed as if they were standing before the Divine Glory of the Day of Judgment. Their commander rode a dark horse, was dressed in white, had a black turban on his head and was reciting the Holy Quran

loudly. This was `Ammar ibn Yasir. Then another contingent appeared. Its standard was in the hand of Qays ibn Sa`d ibn Abadah. Then an army came to sight. Its leader wore white outfit and hade a black turban on this head. He was so handsome that all eyes centered around him. This was Abdullah ibn Abbas. Then followed a contingent of the companions of the Prophet (ص). Their standard bearer was Othman ibn Abbas. Then after the passing of a few contingents, a big crowd was seen wherein there was such a large number of spears that they were overlapping and flags of numerous colors were flying. Among them, a big and lofty standard was seen with a distinctive status. Behind it was seen a rider guarded by sublimity and greatness. His sinews were well-developed and his eyes were cast downwards. His awe and dignity was such that no one could look at him. This was the ever victorious Lion of Allah namely Ali, Ibn Abu Talib (ع). On his right and left were Hassan and Hussain (peace be upon them). In front of him Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya walked in slow steps carrying the banner of victory and glory and on the back were young men of Banu Hashim, the people of Badr and `Abdullah ibn Ja`far ibn Abu Talib. When this army reached the place az-Zawiyah, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) alighted from the horse. After performing a four rak'at prayer, he put his cheeks on the ground. When he lifted his head, the ground was drenched with tears and his tongue was uttering these words:

> O Sustainer of earth, heaven and the high firmament! This is Basra. Fill our lap with its good and protect us from its evil.

Then proceeding forward he got down in the battlefield of Jamal where the enemy was already camping. First of all, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) announced in his army that no one should attack another nor take the initiative. Saying this he came in front of the opposite army and said to Talhah and az-Zubayr, "You ask Aisha by swearing in the name of Allah and His Prophet (ص) whether I am not free from the blame of Othman's blood and whether I used the same words for him which you used to say and whether I pressed you for allegiance or you swore it of your own free will." Talhah got exasperated at these words but az-Zubayr relented. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) turned back after it and giving the Holy Quran to Muslim (a young man from the tribe of Abd Qays sent him toward them to pronounce to them the verdict of the Holy Quran. But people took both of them within aim and covered this godly man with their arrows. Then Ammar ibn Yasir went to canvass and convince them and caution them with the consequences of war but his words were also replied by arrows.

Until now, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had not allowed an attack as a result of which the enemy continued feeling encouraged and went on raining arrows constantly. At last, with the dying of a few valiant combatants consternation was created among Amir al-Mu'minin's ranks and some people came with a few bodies before him and said, "O Commander of the Faithful! You are not allowing us to fight while they are covering us with arrows. How long can we let them make our bosoms the victim of their arrows and remain hand folded at their excesses? At this, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) did show anger but acting with restraint and endurance came to the enemy in that very form without wearing armor or any arm and shouted, "Where is az-Zubayr?!" At first az-Zubayr hesitated to come forward but he noticed that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had no arms so he came out. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said to him "O az-Zubayr! You must remember that one day the Prophet (ص) told you that you would fight with me and wrong and excess would be on your side." Az-Zubayr replied that he had said so. Then Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) inquired AWhy have you come then?" He replied that his memory had missed it and if he had recollected it earlier he would not have come that way. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "Well now you have recollected it" and he replied, "Yes." Saying this he went straight to Aisha and told her that he was leaving. She asked him the reason and he replied, "Ali has reminded me a forgotten matter. I had gone astray, but now I have come on the right path and would not fight Ali ibn Abu Talib at any cost." Aisha said, "You have caught the fear of the swords of the sons of `Abdul-Muttalib." He said, "No" and saying this, he turned the reins of his horse. However, it is gratifying that some consideration was accorded to the Prophet's saying, for at Haw'ab even after recollection of the Prophet's words no more than a transient effect was taken of it. On returning after this conversation, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) observed that they had attacked the right and left flanks of his army." Noticing this, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "Now the plea has been exhausted. Call my son Muhammad." When he came Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "My son, attack them now. Muhammad bowed his head and taking the standard proceeded to the battlefield." But arrows were falling in such exuberance that he had to stop. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) saw this, he called out at him, "Muhammad! Why do not you advance?" He said, "Father, in this shower of arrows, there is not way to proceed. I will wait till the violence of arrows subsides." The Imam (ع) said, "No, thrust yourself in the arrows and spears and attack." Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya advanced a little but the archers so surrounded him that he had to hold his steps. On seeing this a frown

appeared on Amir al-Mu'minin's forehead and said, "This is the affect of your mother's veins. Saying this he took the standard from his hands and folded up his sleeves and made such an attack that a tumult was created in the enemy' ranks from one end to the other. To which ever row he turned, it became clear and to whatever side he directed himself, bodies were seen falling and heads rolling in the hoofs of horses. When after convulsing the rows, he returned to his status and said to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, "Look, my son! Battles are fought like this." Saying this, he gave the standard to him and ordered him to proceed. Muhammad advanced toward the enemy with a contingent of Ansar. The enemy also came out moving and balancing their spears. But the brave son of the valiant father convulsed rows over rows while the other warriors made the battlefield glory and left heaps of dead bodies.

From the other side, there was a full demonstration of the spirit of sacrifice. Dead bodies were falling one over the other, but they continued sacrificing their lives devotedly around the camel. Particularly, the condition of Banu Dabbah was that although their hands were being severed from the elbows for holding the reins of the camel and bosoms were being pierced yet they had the following battle song on their tongues:

To us, death is sweeter than honey. We are Banu Dabbah, camel rearers. We are sons of death when death comes. We announce the death of Othman with the edges of spears. Give us back our chief and there is an end to it.

The low character and ignorance from faith of these Banu Dabbah can be well understood by that one incident which al-Mada'ini has narrated. He writes that in Basra there was a man with a mutilated ear. He asked him its reason when he said, "I was watching the sight of dead bodies in the battlefield of Jamal when I saw a wounded man who sometimes raised his head and sometimes dashed it back on the ground. I approached near." Then, the following two verses were on his lips:

Our mother pushed us into the deep waters of death and did not get back till we had thoroughly drunk.

By misfortune, we obeyed. Banu Taym who are none but slave men and slave girls.

I told him it was not the time to recite verses; he should rather recall Allah and recite the kalima (shahada) (verse of testimony). On my

saying this he gave me an angry look and uttering a sever abuse said, "You are asking me to recite the kalima, get frightened at the last moment and show impatience? I was astonished to hear this and decided to return without saying anything further. When he saw me returned he said, "Wait, for your sake I am prepared to recite, but teach me. I drew close to teach him the kalima when he asked me to get closer. When I got closer, he caught my ear with his teeth and did not leave it till he tore it from the root. I did not think it proper to assault a dying man and was about to get back abusing and cursing him when he asked me to listen to one more thing. I agreed to listen lest he had an unsatisfied wish. He said that when I should get to my mother and she inquired who had bitten my ear, I should say that it was done by `Umayr ibn al-Ahlab ad-Dabbi who had been deceived by a woman aspiring to become the commander of the faithful (head of state).

However, when the dazzling lightning of swords finished the lives of thousand of persons and hundreds of Banu Azd and Banu Dabbah were killed for holding the rein of the camel. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) ordered, "Kill the camel, for it is Satan." Saying this, he made such a severe attack that the cries of 'Peace!' and 'Protection!' rose from all around. When he reached near the camel he ordered Bujayr ibn Buljah to kill the camel at once. Consequently, Bujayr hit it with such might that the camel fell in agony on the side of its bosom. No sooner than the camel fell, the opposite army took to heels and the carrier holding Aisha was left lonely and unguarded. The companions of Amir la-Mu'minin took control of the carrier and under orders of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr escorted Aisha to the house of Safiyya daughter of al-Harith.

This encounter commenced on the 10th of Jumada II, 36 A.H. in the afternoon and came to and end the same evening. In it from Amir al-Mu'minīn's army of twenty two thousand, one thousand and seventy or according to another version, five hundred persons were killed as martyrs while from Aisha's army of thirty thousand, seventeen thousand persons were killed and the Prophet's saying, "That people who assigned their affairs (of state) to a woman would never prosper was fully corroborated." (Al-Imama wal-Siyasa; Muruj al-Dhahab; al-`Iqd al-Farid; al-Tabari's Tarikh).

2. Ibn Abul-Hadid has written that as prophesied by Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), Basra got under the floods twice, once during the days of al-Qadir Billah, and once during the reign of al-Qa'im bi Amrillah. The condition of flooding was such that the whole city was submerged, but the

top ends of the mosque were seen about in the surface of the water and looked like a bird encroaching on its bosom's side.

Sermon 14

Also Condemning the People of Basra

Your earth is close to the sea and away from the sky. Your wits have become light and your minds are full of folly. You are the aim of the archer, a morsel for the eater and an easy prey for the hunter.

Sermon 15

After Resuming the Land Grants Made My Othman Ibn Affan [To the State Treasury], He Said:

By Allah! Even if I had found that by such money women have been married or bondmaids have been purchased I would have resumed it because there is a wide scope in dispensation of justice and he who find it hard to act justly should find it harder to deal with injustice.

Sermon 16

Delivered When Allegiance Was Sworn to Him at Medina

The responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it. He to whom experiences have clearly shown the past exemplary punishments (given by Allah to people) is prevented by piety from falling into doubts. You should know that the same troubles have returned to you which existed when the Prophet (ص) was first sent.

By Allah Who sent the Prophet (ص) with faith and truth! You will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken s in sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till your low persons become high and high ones become low, those who were behind would attain forward positions and those who were forward would become backward. By Allah, I have not concealed a single word or spoken any lie and I had been informed of this event and of this time.

Beware that sins are like unruly horses on whom their riders have been placed and their reins have been let loose so that they would jump

with them in Hell. Beware that piety is like trained horses on whom the riders have been placed with the reins in the hands so that they would take the riders to Heaven. There is right and wrong and there are followers for each. If wrong dominates, it has (always) in the past been so and if truth goes down that too has often occurred. It seldom happens that a thing that lags behind comes forward.

Ash-Sharif ar-Radi says the following by way of commenting on the above: "In the short speech, there is more beauty than can be appreciated and the quantity of amazement aroused by it is more than can be appreciated. Despite what we have stated, it has so many aspects of eloquence that cannot be expressed, nor can anyone reach its depth. And no one can understand what I am saying unless one has attained this are and known its details."

No one appreciates it except those who know (Holy Quran, 29: 43)

From the Same Sermon:

He who has heaven and hell in his view has no other aim. He who attempts and acts quickly succeeds, while the seeker who is slow may also entertain hope. And he who falls short of actions faces destruction in Hell. On the right and left there are misleading paths. Only the middle way if the (right) path which is the Everlasting book and the traditions of the Prophet (ص). From it the Sunnah has spread out and toward it is the eventual return.

He who claims (otherwise) is ruined and he who concocts falsehood is disappointed. He who opposes[1] the right with his face gets destruction. It is enough ignorance for a man not to know himself. He who is strong rooted[2] in piety does not get destruction and the plantation of the people based on piety never remains without water. Hide yourselves in your houses and reform yourselves. Repentance is at your back. One should praise only Allah and condemn only his own self.

In some versions of this same sermon, after the words man abda safhatahu lilhaqqi halaka, the words inda jahalatu'n-nas also occur. In tat case, the meaning of this sentence would be that he who stands in the face of right dies in the estimation of the ignorant.

Piety is the connotation of the heart and the mind being affected and impressed by the Divine Greatness and Gory. As an effect of it, the spirit of man becomes full of the fear of Allah and its inevitable result is

that engrossment in worship and prayers increases. It is impossible that the heart may be full of the Divine fear and there be no manifestation of it in actions and deeds. And since worship and submission reform the heart and nurture the spirit, purity of heart increases with the increase of worship. That is why in the Holy Quran, Ataqwa (piety) has been applied sometimes to fear, in the verse, Ittaqul-laha haqqa tuqatihi (worship Allah as He ought to be worshipped) (3: 102). Taqwa implies worship and devotion, and in the verse wa yakhsha'l-laha wa yattaqhi faullaika humul faizun (24: 52) taqwa implies purity of the spirit and cleanliness of the heart.

In the traditions, taqwa has been assigned three degrees. The first degree is that a man should follow the injunctions and keep aloof from prohibitions. The second degree is that recommended matters should also be followed and disliked things should be avoided. The third degree is that for fear of falling into doubts, one may abstain from the permissible as well. The first degree is for the common men, the second for the nobles and the third for the high dignitaries. Allah has referred to these three degrees in the following verse:

On those who believe and do good, is not blame for what they ate (before) when they did guard themselves and did believe and did good, still (furthermore) they guard themselves and do good, and Allah loves the doers of good. (Holy Quran, 5: 93)

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says that only action based on piety is lasting and only that action will blossom and bear fruit which is watered by piety because worship is only that wherein the feeling of submissiveness exists. Thus, Allah says the following:

Is he, therefore, better who has laid his foundation on fear of Allah and (His) goodwill or he who lays his foundation on the brink of a crumbling bank so it broke down with him into the fire of hell?(Holy Quran 9: 109)

Consequently, every such belief as is not based on knowledge and conviction is like the edifice, erected without foundation, wherein there is no stability or firmness while every action that is without piety is like the plantation which withers because of not being watered.

Sermon 17

About Those Who Sit for Dispensation of Justice among People but Are Not Fit for It

Among all the people, the most detested before Allah are two persons. One is he who is devoted to his self. So he is deviated from the true path and loves speaking about (foul) innovations and inviting toward the wrong path. He is, therefore, a nuisance for those who are enamored of him, is himself misled from the guidance of those enamored of him, is himself misled from the guidance of those preceding him, misleads those who follow him in his life or after his death, carries the weight of others' sins and is entangled in his own misdeeds.

The other man is he who has picked up ignorance. He moves among the ignorant, is senseless in the thick of mischief and is blind to the advantages of peace. Those resembling like men have named him scholar but he is not so. He goes out early morning to collect things whose deficiency is better than plenty, till when he has quenched his thirst form polluted water and acquired meaningless things.

He sits among the people as a judge responsible for solving whatever is confusing to the others. If an ambiguous problem is presented before him he manages a shabby argument about it of his own accord and passes judgment on its basis. In this way, he is entangled in the confusion of doubts as in the spider's web, not knowing whether he was right or wrong. If he is right, he fears lest he errs, while if he is wrong, he hopes he is right. He is ignorant, wandering astray in ignorance and riding on carriages aimlessly moving in darkness. He does not try to find the reality of knowledge. He scatters the traditions as the wind scatters the dry leaves.

By Allah! He is not capable of solving the problems that come to him nor is he fit of the status assigned to him. Whatever he does not know he doses not regard it worth knowing. He does not realize that what is beyond his reach is within the reach of others. If anything is not clear to him, he keeps quiet over it because he knows his own ignorance. Lost lives are crying against his unjust verdicts and properties (that have been wrongly disposed of) are grumbling against him.

I complain to Allah about persons who live ignorant and die misguided. For them nothing is more worthless than Holy Quran if it is

recited as it should be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Holy Quran if is verses are removed from their places, nor anything more vicious than virtue nor more virtuous than vice.

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has held two categories of persons as the most detestable by Allah and the worst among people. Firstly, those who are misguided even in basic tenets and are busy in the spreading of evil. Secondly, those who abandon the Holy Quran and Sunnah and pronounce injunctions through their imagination. They create a circle of their devotees and popularize the religious code of law concocted by themselves. The misguidance and wrongfulness of such persons does not remain confined to their own selves but the seed of misguidance sown by them bears fruit and, growing into the form of a big tree, provides an asylum to the misguided. This misguidance goes on multiplying. And since these very people are the real originators, the weight of other's sins is also on their shoulders as the Holy Quran says the following:

And certainly, they shall bear their own burdens and (others') burdens with their own burdens. (Holy Quran, 29: 13)

Sermon 18

1 Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said in Disparagement of the Differences of Views among the Theologians

When a problem is put before anyone of them he passes judgment on it from his imagination. When exactly the same problem is placed before another of them he passes an opposite verdict. Then these judges go to the chief who had appointed them and he confirms all the verdicts, although their Allah is One (and the same), their Prophet (ص) is one (and the same), their Book (the Holy Quran), is one (and the same).

Is it that Allah ordered them to differ and they obeyed Him? Or He prohibited them from it but hey disobeyed Him? Or (is it that) Allah sent an incomplete Faith and sought their help to complete it? Or they are His partners in the affairs so that it is their share of duty to pronounce and He as to agree? Or is it that Allah, the most Glorified One, sent a perfect faith but the Prophet (ص) fell short of conveying it and handing it over (to the people) ? the fact is that Allah, the most Glorified One, says the following:

We have not neglected anything in the Book (Quran). (Holy Quran, 6: 38)

Allah says that one part of the Holy Quran verifies another part and that there is no divergence in it as He says the following:

And if it had been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found in it much discrepancy. (Holy Quran, 4: 82)

Certainly, the outside of the Holy Quran is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never disappear, its amazing things will never pass away and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself.

It is a disputed problem that where there is no clear argument about a matter in the religious law, whether there does in reality exist an order about it or not. The view adopted by Abul-Hassan al-Ash`ari and his master Abu Ali al-Jubba'i is that in such a case Allah has not ordained any particular course of action but He assigned the task of finding it out and passing a verdict to the jurists so that whatever they hold as prohibited would be deemed prohibited and whatever they regard permissible would be deemed permissible. And if one has one view and the other another, then as many verdicts will exist as there are views and each of them would represent the final order. For example, if one scholar holds that barley malt is prohibited and another jurist's view is that it is permissible, then it would really be both prohibited and permissible. That is, for one who holds is prohibited, its use would be prohibited while for the other its use would be permissible. About this (theory of) correctness, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Karim al-Shahristani writes the following:

A group of theorists hold that in matters where ijtihad (research) is applied there is no settled view about permissibility or; otherwise, and and lawfulness and prohibition thereof, but whatever the mujtahid (the researcher scholar) hold is the order of Allah because the ascertainment of the view of Allah depends upon the verdict of the mujtahid. If it is not so, there will be no verdict at all. And according to this view, every mujtahid would be correct in his opinion. Refer to p. 98 of Al-Milal wal Nihal.

In this case, the mujtahid is taken to be above mistake because a mistake can be deemed to occur where a step is taken against reality, but where there is not reality of verdict, mistake has no sense. Besides this, the mujtahid can be considered to be above mistake if it is held that Allah, being aware of all the views that were likely to be adopted has ordained as

many final orders as a result of which every view corresponds to some such order, or that Allah has assured that the views adopted by the mujtahids should not go beyond what He has ordained, or that by chance, the view of everyone of them would, after all, correspond to some ordained order or other.

The Imamiyyah sect, however, has a different theory, namely that Allah has neither assigned to anyone the right to legislate nor subjected any matter to the view of the mujtahid, nor in case of a difference of views has He ordained numerous real orders. Of course, if the mujtahid cannot arrive at a real order than whatever view he takes after research and probing is enough for him and his followers to act by. Such an order is the apparent order which is a substitute for the real order. In this case, he is excused for missing the real order because he did his best for diving in the deep ocean and to explore its bottom. But, it is a pity that instead of pearls he go only the seashell. He dos not say that observers should except it as a pearl or it should see as such. It is a different matter that Allah, who watches the endeavors, may price it at half so that the endeavor does not go to waste nor his passion discouraged.

If the theory of correctness is adopted then every verdict on law and every opinion shall have to be accepted as correct as Maybudhi has written in fatwa: "In this matter, the view adopted by al-Ash`ari is right. It follows that differing opinions should all be right. Beware, do not bear a bad idea about jurists and do not open your tongue to abuse them.

When contrary theories and divergent views are accepted as correct, it is strange why the action of some conspicuous individuals are explained as mistakes of decision since mistakes of decision by the mujtahid cannot be imagined at all. If the theory of correctness is right, the action of Mu`awiyah and `}'isha should be deemed right; but if their actions can be deemed to be wrong then we should agree that ijtihad can also go wrong and that the theory of correctness is wrong. It will then remain to be decided in its own context whether feminism did not impede the decision of Aisha or whether it was a (wrong) finding of Mu`awiyah or something else. However, this theory of correctness was propounded in order to cover mistakes and to give them the garb of Allah's orders so that there should be no impediment in achieving objectives nor should anyone be able to speak against any misdeeds.

In this sermon, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has referred to those people who deviate from the path of Allah and closing their eyes to light, grope in the darkness of imagination, make faith the victim of their views and

opinions, pronounce new findings, pass orders by their own imagination and produce divergent results. Then on the basis of the theory of correctness, they regard all these divergent and contrary orders as from Allah as though each of their orders represent the Divine revelation so that no order of theirs can be wrong nor can they stumble on any occasion. Thus, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) says in disproving this view that:

1) When Allah is One, the Book (Holy Quran) is one and the Prophet (ص) is one, then the religion (that is followed) should also be one. And when the religion is one, how can there be divergent orders about any matter because there can be divergence in an order only in case he who passed the order has forgotten it or is oblivious or senselessness overtakes him or he willfully desires entanglement in these labyrinths while Allah and the Prophet (ص) are above these things. These divergences cannot, therefore, be attributed to them. These divergences are rather the outcome of the thinking and opinions of people who are bent on twisting the delineations of religion by their own imaginative performances.

2) Allah must have either forbidden these divergences or ordered creating them. If He has ordered in their favor, where is that order and at what place? As for forbidding, the Holy Quran says the following:

Say: Has Allah permitted you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?! (Holy Quran 10: 59)

That is, everything that is not in accordance with the Divine orders is a concoction and concoction is forbidden and prohibited. For those who concoct things, there is in the next world neither success, nor achievement, nor prosperity and good. Thus Allah says the following:

And utter you not whatever lie describes your tongues (saying): This is lawful and this is forbidden, to forge a lie against Allah; verily, those who forge a lie against Allah do not succeed. (Holy Quran, 16: 116)

If Allah has left religion incomplete and the reason for leaving it halfway was that He desired that the people should assist Him in completely the religious code and share with Him in the task of legislating, then this belief is obviously polytheism. If He sent down the religion in complete form, the Prophet (ص) must have failed in conveying it so that room was left for others to apply imagination and opinion. This,

Allah forbid, would mean a weakness of the Prophet (ص) and a bad slur of the selection of Allah.

4) Allah has said in the Holy Quran that He has not left out anything in the Book and has clarified each and every matter. Now, if an order is carved out in conflict with the Holy Quran it would be outside the religious code and its basis would not be on knowledge and perception, or the Holy Quran and Sunnah, but it would be a personal opinion and one's personal judgment which cannot be deemed to have accord with religion and faith.

5) Holy Quran is the basis and source of religion and the fountain head of the laws of Shari'a. If the laws of Shari'a were divergent, there should have been divergence in it also. And, if there were divergences in it, it could not be regarded as the Divine word. When it is the Divine word the laws of Shari`a cannot be divergent so as to accept all divergent and contrary views as correct and imaginative verdicts taken as Quranic dictates.

Sermon 19

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) delivering a lecture from the pulpit of (the mosque of) Kufa when al-Ash`ath ibn Qays[1] objected and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (ع)! This thing is not in your favor but against you.[2] Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) looked at him with anger and said:

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[127]Who is this al-Ash`ath ibn Qays al-Kindi, anyway? His original name was Ma`di Karb and surname Abu Muhammad but, because of his disheveled hair, he is better known as Al-Ash`ath, one having disheveled hair. After the proclamation of Prophethood, he came to Mecca along with his tribe. The Prophet (ص) invited him and his tribe to accept Islam. When, after the *Hijra* (migration of the Holy Prophet [ص] from Mecca to Medina), Islam became established and in full swing. Deputations began to come to Medina in large numbers. He, too, came to the Prophet's audience with Banu Kindah and accepted Islam. The author of *Al-Isti`ab* writes that after the Prophet (ص), this man again turned unbeliever but when the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, he was brought to *Medina* as a prisoner, he again accepted Islam, though this time too, his Islam was a show. Thus, Shaikh Muhammad `Abdo writes in his annotations on *Nahjul-Balagha*:

Just as Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Sallul was a companion of the Prophet (ص), al-Ash`ath was a companion of Ali and both were high-ranking hypocrites. He

How do you know what is for me and what is against me? Curse of Allah and other be on you. You are a weaver and son of a weaver. You are the son of an unbeliever and yourself a hypocrite. You were arrested once by the unbelievers and once by the Muslims, but you wealth and birth could not save you from either. The man who contrives for his own people to be put to sword and invites death and destruction for them does deserve that the near ones should hate him and the remote ones should not trust him.

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "This man was arrested once when an unbeliever and once in the days of Islam." As for Amir al-Mu'minin's words that the man contrived for his own people to be put to the sword, the reference herein is to the incident which occurred to al-

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lost one of his eyes in the battle of Yarmuk. Ibn Qutaybah has included him in the list of renown one-eyed personalities. Abu Bakr's sister, Umm Farwah daughter of Ibn Abu Quhafah, who was once the wife of an al-Azdi then of *Tamim* ad-Darmi, was on the third occasion married to this al-Ash`ath. Three sons were born of her: Muhammad, Isma'il and Ishaq. Biography books indicate that she was blind. Ibn Abul-Hadid has quoted the following statement of Abul-Faraj wherefrom it appears that this man was equally involved in the assassination of Ali (ع):

On the night of the assassination [of Imam Ali (ع)], Ibn Muljim came to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and both retired to a corner of the mosque and sat there when Hijr ibn Adiy passed by that side and he heard al-Ash`ath saying to Ibn Muljim, ABe quick now or else dawn's light will disgrace you. On hearing this, Hijr said to al-Ash`ath, "O one-eyed man! You are getting ready to kill Ali (ع) and hastened toward Ali ibn Abu Talib. But Ibn Muljim had preceded him and struck Ali with a sword. When Hijr turned back, people were crying. Ali (ع) had been killed.

It was his daughter who killed Imam Hassan (ع) with poison. Al-Mas`udi has written the following:

His (Hassan's) wife Ja`dah daughter of al-Ash`ath poisoned him while Mu`awiyah had conspired with her that if she could contrive to poison Hassan (ع), he would pay her one hundred thousand dirhams and marry her to [his son] Yazid. (Refer to *Muruj al-Dhahab*, Vol. 2, p. 650)

His son, Muhammad ibn al-Ash`ath, was active in playing fraud with Muslim bin Aqil in Kufa and in shedding Imam Hussain's blood in Kerbala'. Despite all these shameful stigmas, he is among those men from whom al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nisa'i and Ibn Majah have related traditions...!

Ash`ath ibn Qays in confrontation with Khalid ibn al-Walid at Yamama, where he deceived his people and contrived a trick until Khalid attacked them. After this incident his people nicknamed him, "`Urfan-Nar," which in the parlance stood for "traitor".

After the battle of Nahrawan, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was delivering a sermon in the mosque of Kufa about the ill effects of Arbitration when a man stood up and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (ع)! First you discouraged us from this arbitration but thereafter you allowed it. We cannot understand which of these two was more correct and proper. On hearing this, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) clapped his one hand over the other [as a sign of sorrow and grief as well as helplessness] and said, "This is the reward of one who gives up a firm view that is, this is the outcome of your own actions as you had abandoned firmness and caution and insisted on "arbitration", but al-Ash`ath mistook it to mean as though Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) implied that Amy worry was due to having accepted arbitration, so he spoke out thus: "O Amir al-Mu'minin (ع)! This brings blame on your own self, whereupon Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said the following with firmness: "What do you know what I am saying, "nd what do you understand what is for me or against me?! You are a weaver and the son of a weaver brought up by unbelievers, and a hypocrite are you. The curse of Allah and that of all the world be upon you."

Commentators have written several reasons for Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) calling al-Ash`ath a weaver and a hypocrite. The first reason is because he and his father, like most of the people of his native land, pursued weaving cloth. So, in order to refer to the lowliness of his occupation, he has been called a "weaver". The people of Yemen had other occupations also but mostly this profession was followed among them. Describing their occupations, Khalid ibn Safwān has mentioned this one first of all.

What can I say about a people among whom are only weavers, leather dyers, monkey keepers and donkey riders? The hoopoe found them out, the mouse flooded them[128] and a woman ruled over them (Al-Bayan wal-Tabyin, Vol. 1, p. 130).

[128]This is a reference to the collapse of the famous Ma'rab Dam which was once considered one of the engineering marvels of ancient times. Its collapse, which is believed to have taken place between B.C. 650 - 115, caused the Arabs to migrate from Yemen and populate other parts of the Arabian peninsula. ─ Ed.

The second reason is that hiyaka means walking by bending on either side and since out of pride and conceit this man used to walk shrugging his shoulders and making bends in this body, he has been called hayik.

The third reason is this: It is more conspicuous and clear that he has been called a weaver to denote his foolishness and lowliness because every low person is proverbially known as a "weaver". Their wisdom and sagacity can be well-gauged by the fact that their follies had become proverbial while nothing attains proverbial status without peculiar characteristics. Now that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has also confirmed it, no further argument or reasoning is needed.

The fourth reason is that by this it is meant the person who conspired against Allah and the Holy Prophet (ص) and prepared webs of which is the peculiarity of hypocrites. Thus, in Wasa'il ash- Shi`a (Vol. 12, p. 101) it is stated that: "It was mentioned before Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (ع) that the weaver is accursed when he explained that the weaver implies the person who concocts against Allah and the Prophet (ص)."

After the word "weaver," Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has used the word hypocrite and there is no conjunction in between them in order to emphasize the nearness of meaning thereof. Then, on the basis of this hypocrisy and concealment of truth, he declared him deserving of the curse of Allah and all others, as Allah, the most Glorified One, says the following:

Verily, those that conceal what we have sent of (Our) manifest evidences and guidance, after what we have (so) clearly shown for mankind in the Book (they are), those that Allah does curse them and (also) curse them all those who curse (such ones) (Holy Quran, 2: 159).

After this, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "You could not avoid the degradation of being prisoner when you were unbeliever, not did these ignominies spare you after acceptance of Islam and you were taken prisoner. When an unbeliever, the event of his being taken prisoner occurred in this way that when the tribe of Banu Murad killed his father Qays, he (al-Ash`ath) gathered the warriors of Banu Kindah and divided them into three groups. He himself took the command over one group. On the others, he placed Ka`b ibn Hani' and al-Qash`am ibn Yazid al-Arqam

as commanders. They set off to deal with Banu Murad. But as misfortune would have it, instead of Banu Murad, they attacked Banu al-Harith ibn Ka`b. The result was that Ka`b ibn Hani' and al-Qash'am ibn Yazid al-Arqam were killed and this man was taken prisoner. Eventually, he got released by paying three thousand camels as his ransom. In Amir al-Mu'minin's words, "Your wealth or birth could not save you from either is a reference not to the real ransom money because he was actually released on payment of the release money, but the intention is that neither plenty of wealth nor high status and prestige in the tribe could save him from this ignominy, and he could not protect himself from being taken captive.

The event of his second imprisonment is that when the Holy Prophet of Islam (ص) passed away from this world, a rebellion took place in the area of Hadramawt for repelling which Caliph Abu Bakr wrote to its governor, Ziyad ibn Labid al-Bayadi al-Ansari, to secure allegiance and collect zakat and charities from those people. When Ziyad ibn Labid went to the tribe of Banu Amr ibn Mu`awiyah for collecting the zakat, he took a keen fancy for a she-camel of Shaytan ibn Hijr which was very handsome and had a huge body. He jumped over it and took possession of it. Shaytan ibn Hijr did not agree to spare it and suggested to him to take some other she-camel in its place, but Ziyad did not agree. Shaytan sent for his brother al-Adda' ibn Hijr for his support. On coming he too had a talk but Ziyad insisted on this point and did not, by any means, consent to keep off his hand from that she-camel. At last, both these brothers appealed to Masruq ibn Ma'di Karib for help. Consequently, Masruq also used his influence so that Ziyad might leave the she-camel but he refused categorically, whereupon Masruq became enthusiastic and untying the she-camel handed it over to Satan. On this, Ziyad was infuriated and collecting his men became ready to fight. On the other side, Banu Wali'ah also assembled to face the but could not defeat Ziyad and were badly beaten at his hands. Their women were taken away and property was looted. Eventually those who had survived were obliged to take refuge under the protection of al-Ash`ath. Al-Ash`ath promised assistance on the condition that he should be acknowledged ruler of the area. Those people agreed to this condition and his coronation was also formally solemnized. After having his authority acknowledged he arranged an army and set out to fight Ziyad. On the other side Abu Bakr had written to the chief of Yemen, al-Muhajir ibn Abu Umayyah to go for the help of Ziyad with a contingent. Al-Muhajir was coming with his contingent when they came face-to-face. Seeing each other, they drew swords and commenced fighting at az-Zurqan. In the end al-Ash`ath fled from the battle-field and taking his remaining men closed himself in the fort of an-Najjar. The

enemy was such as to let them alone. They laid siege around the fort. Al-Ash`ath thought how long could he remain shut up I the fort with the lack of equipment and men and that he should think out some way of escape. So one night he stealthily came out of the fort and met Ziyad and al-Muhajir and conspired with them that if they gave asylum to nine members of his family, he would get the fort gate opened. They accepted this term and asked him to write for them, the names of those nine persons. He wrote down the nine names, but acting on his traditional wisdom forgot to write his own name in that list. After settling this, he told his people that he had secured protection for them and the gate of the fort should be opened. When the gate was opened Ziy\sect fs22 ad As forces pounced upon them. They said they had been promised protection whereupon Ziyad's army said that this was wrong and that al-Ash`ath had asked protection only for nine members of his house, whose names were preserved with them. In short, eight hundred persons were put to sword and the hands of several women were hopped off, while according to the settlement, nine men were left, but the case of al-Ash`ath became complicated. Eventually, it was decided that he should be sent to Abu Bakr and he should decide about him. At last, he was sent to Medina in chains along with a thousand women prisoners. On the way, relations and others, men and women, all hurled curses at him and the women were calling him traitor and the one who got his own people put to sword. Who else can be a great traitor? However, when he reached Meduna, Abu Bakr released him and on that occasion, he was married to Umm Farwah.

Sermon 20

Death and Learning Lessons From It

If you could see what has been seen by those of you who have died, you would be puzzled and troubled. Then you would have listened and obeyed; but what they have seen is yet curtained off from you. Shortly, the curtain would be thrown off. You have been shown, provided you see and you have been made to listen provided you listen and you have been guided if you accept guidance. I spoke unto you with truth. You have been called aloud by (instructive) examples and warned through items full of warnings. After the heavenly messengers (angels), only man can convey the message from Allah. (So what I am conveying is from Allah).

Sermon 21

Advice to Keep Light in this World

Your aim (reward or punishment) is before you. Behind your back is the hour (of resurrection) which is driving you on. Keep (yourself) light and overtake (the forward ones). Your last ones are being awaited by the first ones (who have preceded you).

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "If this utterance of Ali (ع) is weighed with any other utterance except the words of Allah or of the Holy Prophet (ص), it would prove heavier and superior in every respect. For example, Ali's saying "keep light and overtake' is the shortest expression every heard with the greatest sense conveyed. How broad its meaning is and how clear its spring of wisdom! We have pointed out the greatness and meaningfulness of this phrase in our book Al-Khasa'is.

Sermon 22

About Those Who Accused Him of `Othman's Killing

Beware! Satan has certainly started instigating his forces and has collected his army in order that oppression may reach its extreme ends and wrong may come back to its status. By Allah, they have not put a correct blame on me, nor have they done justice between me and themselves.

They are demanding of me a right which they have abandoned and a blood that they have themselves shed. If I were a partner with them in it then they too have their share of it. But if they did it without me they alone have to face the consequences. Their biggest argument (against me) is really against their own selves. They are suckling from a mother who is already dry and bringing into life innovation that is already dead. How disappointing is this challenger 9to battle) ? Who is this challenger and for what is he being responded to? I am happy that the reasoning of Allah has been exhausted before them and He knows (all) about them. If they refuse (to obey) I will offer them the edge of the sword which is enough of a cure of wrong and supporter of right.

It is strange that they send me word to proceed to them for spear-fighting and to keep ready for fighting with swords. May the mourning women mourn over them. I have ever been so that I as never frightened

by fighting nor threatened by clashing. I enjoy full certainty of belief from my Allah and have no doubt in my faith.

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was accused of `Othman's assassination, he delivered this sermon to refute that allegation, wherein he says about those who blamed him that: "These seekers of vengeance cannot say that I alone am the assassin and that no one else took part in it. Nor can they falsify witnessed events by saying that they were unconcerned with it. Why then have they put me foremost for this avenging? With me they should include themselves also. If I am free of this blame they cannot establish their freedom from it. How can they detach themselves from this punishment? the truth of the matter is that by accusing me of this charge, their aim is that I should behave with them in the same manner to which they are accustomed. But they should behave with them in the same manner to which they are accustomed. But they should not expect from me that I would revive the innovations of the previous regimes. As for fighting, neither was I ever afraid of it nor am I so now. Allah knows my intention and He also knows that those standing on the excuse of taking revenge are themselves his assassins. Thus, history corroborates that the people who managed his (Othman's) assassination by agitation and had even prevented his burial in Muslims' graveyard by hurling stones at his coffin were the same who rose for avenging his blood. In this connection, the names of Talhah ibn Ubaydillah, az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam and Aisha are at the top of the list since on both occasions their efforts come to sigh with conspicuity. Thus ibn Abul-Hadid writes that: "Those who have written the account f the assassination of Othman state that one ht day of his killing Talhah's condition was that in order to obscure himself form the eyes of the people he had a veil on his face and was shooting arrows at Othman's house."

And, in this connection about az-Zubayr ideas he writes the following: "Historians have also stated that az-Zubayr used to say: "Kill Othman. He has altered your faith.'[129] People said, "Your son is standing at his door and guarding him and he replied, "Even my son my be lost, but Othman must be killed. Othman will be lying like a carcass on the Sirat tomorrow" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 9, pp. 35-36).

[129] Az-Zubayr here was echoing what his cousin, Aisha, used to say, that is, *Uqtulu Na`thal faqad kafar* (Kill Na`thal [a bad name whereby she called Othman], for he has committed apostasy). ─ Ed.

About Aisha, Ibn Abd Rabbih writes the following: “Mughirah ibn Shu’bah came to Aisha when she said, “O Abu Abdullah, I wish you have been with me on the day of Jamal; how arrows were piercing through my hawdaj (camel litter) till some of them stuck my body.’ Al-Mughirah said, “I wish one of them should have killed you.’ She said, “Allah may have pity on you; why so?’ He replied, “So that it would have been some atonement for what you had done against Othman’, according to Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, p. 294.

Sermon 23

About Keeping Aloof from Envy and Good Behavior Towards Kith and Kin

Verily the Divine orders descend form heaven to earth like drops of rain bringing to everyone what is destined for him whether plenty or paucity. So if any one of you observes for his brother plenty of progeny or of wealth or of self, it should not be a worry for him. So long as a Muslim does not commit such an act that if it is disclosed, he has to bend his eyes (in shame) and by which low people are emboldened he is like the gambler who expects that the first draw of his arrow would secure him gain and also cover up the previous loss.

Similarly, the Muslim who is free from dishonesty expects one of the two good things; either a cal from Allah and in that case whatever is with Allah is the best for him or the livelihood of Allah. He has already children and property while his faith and respect are with him. Certainly, wealth and children are the plantations of this world while virtuous deeds are the plantation of the next world. Sometimes, Allah joins all these in some groups.

Beware of Allah against what He has cautioned you and keep afraid of Him to the extend that no excuse be needed for it. Act without show or intention of being heard for if a man acts for some one else then Allah makes him over to that one. We ask Allah to grant us) the positions of the martyrs, company of the virtuous and friendship of the prophets.

O people! Surely no one (even though he may be rich) can do without his kinsmen and their support by hands or tongues. They alone are his support from the rear and can ward off from him his troubles and they are the most kind to him when tribulations befall him. The good

memory of a man that Allah retains among people is better than the property which others inherit from him.

In the same sermon, he says the following:

Behold! If any one of you finds your near ones in want or starvation, he should not desist from helping them with that which will not increase if this help is not extended nor decrease by thus spending it. Whoever holds up his hand from (helping) his kinsmen, he holds only one hand, but at the same time of his need, many hands remain held up form helping him. One who is sweet-tempered can retain the love of his people for good.

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "In this sermon, al-ghafira means plenty or abundance and this is derived from the Arab saying, al-jam` al-ghafir meaning thick crowd. In some versions for al-ghafira, the word afwatan appears. Afwa means the good and selected part of anything. It is said: akaltu afwata't-ta`am, to mean 'I ate a choice meal.'" About Awa man yaqbid yadahu an'ashiratihi appearing towards the end, he points out how beautiful the meaning of this sentence is, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) implies that he who does not help his own kinsmen withholds only his hand but when he is in need of their assistance and would be looking for their sympathy and support, then he would remain deprived of the sympathies and succor of so many of their extending hands and marching feet.

Sermon 25

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) received successive news that Mu`awiyah's men were occupying cities[1] and his own officers in Yemen namely `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas and Sa'i d ibn Imran came to him retreating after being overpowered by Bisr ibn Abu Arta'ah, he was much disturbed by the slackness of his own men in jihad and their difference with his opinion. Proceeding on the pulpit, he said:

Nothing (is left to me) but Kufa which I can hold and extend (which is in my hand to play with). (O Kufa) if this is your condition that whirlwinds continue blowing through you then Allah may destroy you.

Then he illustrated with this verse of a poet:

O Amr! By your good father's life, I have received only a small bit of fat from this pot (fat that remains sticking to it even after it has been emptied).

Then he went on to say:

I have been informed that Bisr has overpowered Yemen. By Allah, I have begun thinking about these people that they would shortly snatch away the whole country through their unity on their wrong and your disunity (from your own right) and separation, your disobedience of your Imam in matters of right and their obedience to their leader in matters of wrong, their fulfillment of the trust in favor of their master and your betrayal, their god work in their cities and your mischief. Even if I give you charge of a wooden bowl I fear you would run away with its handle.

O Lord! They are disgusted of me and I am disgusted of them. They are weary of me and I am weary of them. Change them for me with better ones and change me for them with a worse one. O my Allah melt their hearts as salt melts in water. By Allah I wish I had only a thousand horsemen of Banu Firas ibn Ghanm (as the poet says):

If you call them the horsemen would come to you like the summer cloud.

Thereafter, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) stepped down from the pulpit.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "In this verse, the word armiyah is plural of ramiyy which means cloud and hamin here means summer. The poet has particularized the cloud of summer because it moves swiftly. This is so because it is devoid of water while a cloud moves slowly when it is laden with rain. Such clouds generally appear (in Arabia) in winter. By this verse, the poet intends to convey that when they are called and referred to for help they approach with rapidity and this is borne by the first line "If you call them, they will reach you."

Sermon 26

Arabia Before the Proclamation of Prophethood

Allah sent Muhammad (ص) as a warner (against vice) for all the worlds and a trustee of His revelation, while you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided among rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty water and ate filthy food. You shed the blood of each other and cared not for relationships. Idols were fixed among you and sins were clinging to you.

A portion of the same sermon on the attentiveness of the people after the death of the Holy Prophet (ص):

I looked and found that there was no supporter for me except my family, so I refrained from thrusting them unto death. I kept my eyes closed despite motes in them. I drank despite a choking of the throat. I exercised patience despite trouble in breathing and despite having to take sour colocynth as food.

Part of the same sermon on the settlement between Mu`awiyah and Amr ibn al-As:

He did not swear allegiance till he got him to agree that he would pay him its price. The hand of this purchaser (of allegiance) may not be successful and the contract of the seller may face disgrace. Now you should take up arms for war and arrange equipment for it. Its flames have grown high and its brightness has increased. Clothe yourself with patience for it is the best to victory.[130]

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[130]Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had delivered a sermon before setting off for Nahrawan. These are three parts from it. In the first part he has described the condition of Arabia before the Proclamation (of Prophethood); in the second he has referred to circumstances which forced him to keep quiet and in the third he has described the conversation and settlement between Mu`awiyah and `Amr ibn al-As. The status of this mutual settlement was that when Amīr al-Mu'minīn (ع) sent Jarir ibn Abdillah al-Bajali to Mu`awiyah to secure his allegiance, he detained Jarir under the excuse of giving a reply. In the meantime he began exploring how far the people of Syria would support him. When he succeeded in making them his supporters by rousing them to avenge Othman's blood, he consulted with his brother Utbah ibn Abu Sufyan. He suggested, "If in this matter `Amr ibn As was associated, he would solve most of the difficulties through his sagacity, but he would not be easily prepared to stabilize your authority unless he got the price which he desired for it. If you are ready for this, he would prove the best counselor and helper." Mu`awiyah liked this suggestion, sent for `Amr ibn As and discussed with him and eventually it was settled that he would avenge Othman's blood by holding Amir al-Mu'minin n (ع) liable for it in exchange for the governorship of

Sermon 27

Exhorting People for Jihad

Now then, surely Jihad is one of the doors to Paradise, which Allah has opened for His chief friends. It is the outfit of piety and the protective armor of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it Allah covers him with the outfit of disgrace and the clothe s of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him.

Beware! I called you (insistently) to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you because by Allah, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace. But you put it off for others and forsook it till destruction befell you and your cities were occupied. The horsemen of Banu Ghamid 1 have reached al-Anbar and killed Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison.

I have come to know that everyone of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under the protection of Islam and took away their ornaments from their legs, arms, necks and ears. No woman could resist it except by pronouncing the verse, AWe are from Allah and to Him we shall return. (Holy Quran, 2: 156) Then they returned, laden with wealth, without any wound or loss of life. If any Muslim dies of grief after all this he is not to be blamed but rather there is justification for him before me.

How strange! How strange! By Allah! My heart sinks to see the unity of these people in their wrong-doings and your dispersion from the right. May woe and grief befall you. You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked but you do not attack. Allah is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it. When I ask you to move against them in the summer you say it is hot weather, spare us until the heat subsides from us. When I order you to march in winter you say it is severely cold; give us time until the cold clears from us. These are just excuses of evading heat or cold

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Egypt, and by whatever means possible, he would not let Mu`awiyah's authority in Syria endure. Consequently, both of them fulfilled the agreement and kept their words.

because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by Allah, running away (in a greater degree) from the sword (war).

O you semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (women kept in seclusion from the outside world). I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By Allah, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May Allah fight you! You have filled my heart with puss and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthful after mouthful of grief. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraish started saying that the son of Abu Talib is brave but does not know (tactics of) war. Allah bless them! Is any one of them more fierce in war and more older in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within my twenties and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion.

After the battle of Siffin, Mu`awiyah had spread killing and bloodshed all around and started encroachments on cities within Amir al-Mu'minin's domain. In this connection he duped Sufyan ibn Awf al-Ghamidi with a force of six thousand to attack Hit, al-Anbar and al-Mada'in. First he reached al-Mada'in but finding it deserted proceeded to al-Anbar. Here a contingent of five hundred soldiers was posted as guard from Amir al-Mu'minin's side, but it could not resist the fierce army of Mu`awiyah. Only a hundred men stuck to their status and they faced them as stoutly as they could. But, collecting together, the enemy's force made such a severe attack that they too could no more resist and the chief of the contingent, Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri was killed along with thirty others. When the battlefield was clear the enemy ransacked al-Anbar with total freedom and left the city completely destroyed.

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) got the news of this attack, he ascended the pulpit and exhorted the people for crushing the enemy and called them to jihad. Yet, from no quarter was there any voice or response. He alighted from the pulpit utterly disgusted and worried and in the same condition set off for the enemy on foot. When people observed this their sense of self-respect and shame was also awakened and they too followed him. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) stopped at an-Nukhayla. People then surrounded him and insisted that he return as they had enough to face the enemy. When their insistence increased beyond reckoning, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) consented to return and Sa'id ibn Qays al-Hamdani proceeded forward with a force of eight thousand. But Sufyan ibn Awf al-Ghamidi had gone, so Sa'id came back without any encounter. When

Sa'id reached Kufa then - according to the version of Ibn Abu' Hadid - Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was so deeply grieved and indisposed during those days to an extent of not wishing to enter the mosque. He instead sat in the corridor of his residence (that connects the entrance of the mosque) and wrote this sermon for the people but gave it to his slave Sa`d to read for them. But al-Mubarrad (Al-Kamil, Vol. 1, pp. 104-107) has related from `Ubaydullah ibn Hafs al-Taymi, Ibn Aisha, that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) delivered this sermon on a high place in an-Nukhayla. Ibn Maytham has held this as a preferable view.

Sermon 28

About the Transient Nature of this World and the Importance of the next World

So now, surely this world has turned its back and announced its departure while the next world has appeared forward and proclaimed its approach. Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Is there no one to offer repentance over his faults before his death? Or is there no one to perform virtuous acts before the day of trial?

Beware, surely you are in the days of hopes behind which stands death. Whoever acts during the days of his hope before the approach of his death, his action would benefit him and his death would not harm him. But he who fails to act during the period of hope before the approach of death, his action is a loss and his death will harm him. Beware and act during a period of attraction just as you act during a period of dread. Beware, surely I have not seen one who covets Paradise asleep nor dreads Hell to be asleep. Beware, he whom right does not benefit must suffer the harm of the wrong and he whom guidance does not keep firm will be led away by misguidance towards destruction.

Beware, you have been ordered insistently to march and have been guided as how to provide for the journey. Surely the most frightening thing which I am afraid of about you is to follow desires and to widen the hopes. Provide for yourself from this world what would save you tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "If there could be an utterance which would drag the neck towards renunciation in this world and force action for the next world, it is this sermon. It is enough to cut one off from

the entanglements of hopes and to ignite the flames of preaching (for virtue) and warning (against vice). His most wonderful words in this sermon are: `Today is the day of preparation, while tomorrow is the day of race.' The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell.' Besides the sublimity of these words, the greatness of their meaning, the true similes and factual illustrations, there are wonderful secrets and delicate implications the rein."

It is his saying that his place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Here he has used two different words to convey two different meanings. For Paradise he has used the expression "place to proceed to" but for Hell this word has not been used. One proceeds to a place which he likes and desires and this can be true for Paradise only. Hell does not have the attractiveness that it may be liked or proceeded to. We seek Allah's protection from it. Since for Hell it was not proper to say Ato be proceeded to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) employed the word doom, implying the last place of stay where one reaches even though it may mean grief and worry or happiness and pleasure.

This word is capable of conveying both senses. However, it should be taken in the sense of al-masir or al-ma'al, that is, the last resort. Quranic verse is "Say: Enjoy you (your pleasures for a while), for your last resort is into (hell) fire" (Quran, 14: 30). Here, to say sabqatakum, that is, "the place for you to proceed to," in place of the word "masirakum," that is, your doom or last resort would not be proper in any way. Think and ponder over it and see how wondrous is its inner implication and how far its depth goes with beauty. Amir al-Mu'minin's utterance is generally on these lines. In some versions the word sabqah is shown as subqah, which is applied to a reward fixed for the winner in a race. However, both meanings are close to each other because a reward is not for an undesirable action but for a good and commendable performance.

Sermon 29

About Those Who Found Pretexts at the Time of Jihad

O people! Your bodies are together but your desires are divergent. Your talk softens the hard stones and your action attracts your enemy towards you. You claim in your sittings that you would do this and that, but when fighting approaches, you say (to war), "turn away" (i.e. flee away). If one calls you (for help), the call receives no heed. And he

who deals harshly with you his heart has no solace. The excuses are amiss like that of a debtor unwilling to pay. The ignoble cannot ward off oppression. Right cannot be achieved without effort. Which is the house besides this one to protect? And with which leader (Imam) would you go for fighting after me?

By Allah! deceived is one whom you have deceived while, by Allah, he who is successful with you receives only useless arrows! You are like broken arrows thrown over the enemy. By Allah! I am now in the status that I neither confirm your views nor hope for your support, nor challenge the enemy through you. What is the matter with you? What is your ailment? What is your cure? the other party is also men of your shape (but they are so different in character). Will there be talk without action, carelessness without piety and greed in things not right?[131]

Sermon 30

Disclosing Real Facts about the Assassination of Othman Ibn Affan, Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said:

If I had ordered his assassination I should have been his killer, but if I had refrained others from killing him I would have been his helper.

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[131]After the battle of Nahrawan, Mu`awiyah sent ad-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri with a force of four thousand towards Kufa with the purpose that he should create disorder in the area, killing whomever he found and keeping them busy with bloodshed and destruction so that Amir al-Mu'minan (ع) should find no rest or peace of mind. He set off for the achievement of this aim and shedding innocent blood and spreading destruction all around reached the way up to the place of ath-Tha`labiyya. He attacked a caravan of pilgrims (to Mecca) and looted all their wealth and belongings. Then at al-Qutqutana, he killed the nephew of Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, the Holy Prophet's companion, namely Amr ibn Uways ibn Mas`ud together with his followers. In this manner he created havoc and bloodshed all around. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) came to know of this wreck and ruin he called his men to battle in order to put a stop to this vandalism, but people seemed to avoid war. Being disgusted with their lethargy and lack of enthusiasm he ascended the pulpit and delivered this sermon. He roused the men to feel shame and not to try and avoid war but to rise for the protection of their country like brave men without employing wrong and lame excuses. At last, Hijr ibn Adiy al-Kindi rose with a force of four thousand for crushing the enemy and overtook them at Tadmur. Only a small encounter has taken place between the parties when night came on and they fled with only nineteen killed on their side. In Amir al-Mu'minin's army, two persons fell as martyrs.

The status was that he who helped him cannot now say that he is better than the one who deserted him while he who deserted him cannot say that he is better than the one who helped him. I am putting before you his case. He appropriated (wealth) and did it badly. You protested against it and committed excess the rein. With Allah lies the real verdict between the one who appropriates and that who protests.

Othman is the first Umayyad Caliph of Islam who ascended the Caliphate on the 1st of Muharram, 24 A.H. at the age of seventy. After having wielded full control and authority over the affairs of the Muslims for twelve years, he was killed at their hands on the 18th of Dhul-Hijja, 35 A.H. And was buried at Hashsh Kawkab.

One fact cannot be denied: Othman's killing was the result of his own weaknesses and the black misdeeds of the officers he appointed; otherwise, there is no reason that Muslims should have unanimously agreed on killing him while no one except a few of his own house stood up to support and defend him. Muslims would have certainly given consideration to his age, seniority, prestige and distinction of companionship of the Prophet (ص) but his ways and deeds had so marred the atmosphere that no one seemed prepared to sympathize and side with him. The oppression and excesses perpetrated on the high-ranking companions of the Prophet (ص) had roused a wave of grief and anger among the Arab tribes. Everyone was infuriated and looked at his haughtiness and wrong doings with disdainful eyes. Thus, due to Abu Dharr's disgrace, dishonor and the externment of Banu Ghifar and their associate tribes, due to Abdullah ibn Mas`ud's merciless beating of Banu Hudhayl and their associates, due to the breaking of the ribs of Ammar ibn Yasir Banu Makhzum and their associates Banu Zuhrah and due to the plot for the killing of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, Banu Taym all had a storm of rage in their hearts. The Muslims of other cities were also brimful of complaints at the hands of his officers, who under the intoxication of wealth and the effects of luxury did whatever they wished and crushed whomever they wanted. They had no fear of punishment from the center nor apprehension of any enquiry. People were fluttering to get out of their talons of oppression but no one was ready to listen to their cries of pain and restlessness. Feelings of hatred were rising but no care was taken to put them down. The companions of the Prophet (ص) were also sick of him as they saw that peace was destroyed, the administration was topsy-turvy and Islam's features were being metamorphosed. The poor and the starving were craving for dried crusts while Banu Umayyah were rolling in wealth. The Caliphate had become a handle for belly-

filling and a means of amassing wealth. Consequently, they too did not lag behind in preparing the ground for killing him. Rather, it was at their letters and messages that people from Kufa, Basra and Egypt had collected in Medina. Observing this behavior of the people of Medina, Othman wrote Mu`awiyah saying, "So now, certainly the people of Medina have turned heretics, have turned faith against obedience and broken the (oath of) allegiance. Send me the warriors of Syria on brisk and sturdy horses."

The policy adopted by Mu`awiyah on receipt of this letter also throws light on the condition of the companions. Al-Tabari, the renown historian, writes the following after this: "When the letter reached Mu`awiyah he pondered over it and considered it bad to openly oppose the companions of the Prophet (ص) since he was aware of their unanimity."

In view of these circumstances to regard the killing of Othman as a consequence of timely enthusiasm and temporary feelings and to hurl it at some insurgents is to veil the fact, since all the factors of his opposition existed within Medina itself, while those coming from without had collected for seeking redress of their grievances at their call. Their aim was only improvement of the status, not killing or bloodshed. If their complaints had been heard then an occasion for this bloodshed would not have arisen. What happened was that when, having been disgusted with the oppression and excesses of `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abu Sahr who was foster brother of Othman, the people of Egypt proceeded towards Medina and camped in the valley of Dhakhushub near the city. They sent a man with a letter to Othman and demanded that oppression should stop, the existing ways should be changed and repentance should be offered for the future. But instead of giving a reply, Othman turned these men out of the house and did not consider their demands worthy of any attention.

The people entered the city to raise their voice against this pride and haughtiness and complained to the people of this behavior besides other excesses. On the other side many people from Kufa and Basra had also arrived with their complaints. After joining with the se, together they proceeded forward with the additional backing of the people of Medina and confined Othman within his house, although there was no restriction on his going and coming to the mosque. But in his sermon on the very first Friday he severely rebuked these people and even held them accursed, whereupon people got infuriated and threw pebbles at him. As a result, he lost control and fell from the pulpit. After a few days, his coming and going to the mosque was also banned.

When Othman saw matters deteriorating to this extent he implored Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) very submissively to find some way for his rescue and to disperse the people in whatever way he could. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "On what terms can I ask them to leave when their demands are justified? Othman said, "I authorize you in this matter. Whatever terms you would settle with them I would be bound by them. So Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) went and met the Egyptians and talked to them. They consented to return on the condition that all the tyrannies should be wiped out and Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr made governor by removing ibn Abu Sahr. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) came back and put their demand before Othman who accepted it without any hesitation and said that to get over these excesses, time was required. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) pointed out that for matters concerning Medina delay had no sense. However, for other places so much time could be allowed that the Caliph's message could reach them. Othman insisted that three days were also needed for Medina. After discussion with the Egyptians, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) agreed to it also and took all the responsibility thereof upon himself. Then they dispersed at his suggestion. Some of them went to Egypt with Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr while some went to the valley of Dhakhushub and stayed there until this whole matter ended. On the second day of this event, Marwan ibn al-Hakam said to Othman, AIt is good, these people have gone, but to stop people coming from other cities you should issue a statement so that they should not come this way, but sit quiet at their places. That statement should be that some people collected in Medina after hearing some irresponsible talk but when they came to know that whatever they heard was wrong they were satisfied and have gone back. Othman did not want to speak such a clear lie but Marwan canvassed him, so he agreed. Speaking in the Holy Prophet's Mosque, he said, "These Egyptians had received some reports about their caliph, and when satisfied that they were all baseless and wrong, they went back to their cities."

No sooner had he said this when there was a great deal of mourning at the mosque, and people began to shout to Othman: "Repent! Fear Allah! What is this lie you are uttering?!" Othman was confused in this commotion and had to offer repentance. Consequently, he turned to the Ka`ba, moaned in the audience of Allah and returned home.

Probably after this very event, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) advised Othman saying, "You should openly offer repentance about your past

misdeeds so that these uprisings should subside for good. Otherwise, if tomorrow people of some other places come, you will again cling to my neck to rid you of them." Consequently, Othman delivered a speech at the Prophet's Mosque wherein he admitted his mistakes, offering repentance and swearing to remain careful in future. He told the people that when he stepped down from the pulpit that their representatives should meet him and he would remove their grievances and meet their demands. On this people acclaimed this action of his and washed away their ill-feelings with tears to a great extent.

When Othman reached his house, Marwan sought permission to say something, but Othman's wife Na'ila daughter of Qarafisah intervened. Turning to Marwan, she said, "For Allah's sake, you keep quiet. You will surely say only such a thing as will bring nothing but death to him." Marwan felt offended and retorted, "You have no right to interfere in these matters. You are the daughter of that very person who did not know till his death how to perform his ablution." Na'ila replied with fury, "You are wrong and are laying a false blame. Before uttering anything about my father, you should have cast a glance on the features of your own father. But had it not been for my consideration for that old man, I would have spoken things at which people would have shuddered yet would have confirmed every word." When Othman saw how the conversation between his cousin and wife was getting prolonged and nasty, he stopped them and asked Marwan to tell him what he wished. Marwan said, "What is it with you saying at the mosque what you said, and what repentance have you offered?! In my view, sticking to the sin was a thousand times better than such repentance because no matter how great the sins might have been, they may multiply there, and there is always room for repentance still, but repentance by force is no repentance at all. You have said what you have, but now see the consequences of this open announcement: The crowds of people are now at your door. Now go forward and fulfil their demands." Othman then said, "Well, I have said what I have said. Now you must deal with these people. It is not in my power to deal with them." Consequently, finding out his implied consent, Marwan came out and addressing the people spoke out thus: "Why have you assembled here? Do you intend to attack or to ransack? Remember, you cannot easily snatch away power from our hands, take that idea out from your hearts that you would subdue us. We are not to be subdued by anyone. Take away your black faces from here. Allah may disgrace and dishonor you."

When people noticed this changed countenance and altered picture, they rose from there full of anger and rage and went straight to

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and related to him the whole story. On hearing it, mir al-Mu'minin (ع) was infuriated and immediately went to Othman and said to him, "Good Heavens! How badly you have behaved with the Muslims! You have forsaken faith for the sake of a faithless and characterless man and have lost all wit. At least you should have regard and consideration for your own promise. What is this that at Marwan's beckoning you have set off with your eyes folded? Remember this: He will throw you in such a dark well from which you will never be able to come out. You have become the like a beast of burden for Marwan, so he can now ride on you as he pleases and put you on whatever wrong way he wishes. In the future, I shall never intervene in your affairs, nor shall I tell people anything. Now you should manage your affairs on your own."

Saying all this, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) got back, and when Na'ila got the chance, she said to Othman, "Did I not tell you to get rid of Marwan or else he would put such a stain on you that it would not be removed despite all your efforts? Well, what is the good in following the words of one who is without any respect among the people and is held low before their eyes? Make Ali agree; otherwise, remember that restoring the disturbed state of affairs is neither within your power nor in that of Marwan." Othman was impressed by this statement, so he sent a man after Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), but the Imam (ع) refused to meet with Othman. There was no siege around Othman, but shame deterred him. With what face could he come out of the house? But there was no way without coming out. Consequently, he came out quietly in the gloom of night and reaching Amir al-Mu'minin's place, he moaned his helplessness and loneliness, offered excuses and also assured him of keeping promises but Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "You make a promise in the Prophet's Mosque standing before all the people but it is fulfilled in this way that when people go to you they are rebuked and even abuses are hurled at them. When this is the state of your undertakings which the world has seen, then how and on what grounds can I trust any word of yours in the future. Do not have any expectation from me now. I am not prepared to accept any responsibility on your behalf. The tracks are open before you. Adopt whichever way you like and tread whatever track you choose." After this talk, Othman came back and began blaming Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) in retort to the effect that all the disturbances were rising at his instance and that he was not doing anything despite being able to do everything.

On this side, the result of repentance was as it was. Now let us see the other side. When after crossing the border of Hijaz, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr reached the place Aylah on the coast of the red Sea people caught sight of a camel rider who was making his camel run so fast as though the enemy was chasing him. These people had some misgivings about him and, therefore, called him and inquired as to who he was. He said he was the slave of Othman. They inquired as to where he was bound. He said Egypt. They inquired to whom he was going. He replied to the Governor of Egypt. People said that the Governor of Egypt was with them. To whom was he going then? He said he was to go to ibn Abu Sahr. People asked him if any letter was with him. He denied. They asked for what purpose he was going. He said he did not know that. One of these people thought that his clothe s should be searched. So the search was made, but nothing was found on him. Kinanah ibn Bishr at-Tujibi said, "See his water-skin." People said, "Leave him, how can there be a letter in the water?!" Kinanah said, "You do not know what cunning these people play." Consequently, the water-skin was opened and seen. There was a lead pipe in it wherein was a letter. When it was opened and read, the Caliph's order in it was that: "When Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and his party reach you, then from among them kill so-and-so, arrest so-and-so, and put-so-and so in jail. But you must remain at your post." On reading this, all were stunned and thus began to look at one another in astonishment. As a Persian axiom says, "Mind was just burst in astonishment as to what wonder it was!"

Those proceeding forward were riding into the mouth of death, consequently they returned to Medīna taking the slave with them. Reaching there they placed that letter before all the companions of the Prophet (ص). Whoever heard this incident remained stunned with astonishment and there was no one who was not abusing Othman. Afterwards a few companions went to Othman along with these people and asked whose seal was there on this letter. He replied that it was his own. They inquired whose writing it was. He said it was his secretary's. They inquired whose slave was that man. He replied that it was his. They inquired whose riding beast it was. He replied that it was that of the Government. They inquired who had sent it. He said he had no knowledge of it. People then said, "Good Heavens! Everything is yours, but you do not know who had sent it. If you are so helpless, you must leave this Caliphate and get away from it so that such a man can come who can administer the affairs of the Muslims." He replied, "It is not possible that I should put off the outfit of Caliphate which Allah has put on me. Of course, I would offer repentance." People said, "Why should you speak of

repentance which has already been flouted on the day when Marwan was representing you on your door and whatever was wanting has been made up by this letter. Now we are not going to be duped into these bluffs. Leave the Caliphate, and if our brethren stand in our way we will hold them up; but if they prepare for fighting we too will fight. Neither our hands are stiff nor our swords blunt. If you regard all Muslims equally, if you uphold justice, hand over Marwan and enable us to inquire from him on whose strength and support he wanted to play with the precious lives of Muslims by writing this letter." But Othmān rejected this demand, refusing to hand over Marwan to them, whereupon people said that the letter had been written at his behest.

However, improving conditions again deteriorated and they ought to have deteriorated because despite lapse of the required time everything was just as it had been and not a jot of difference had occurred. Consequently, the people who had stayed behind in the valley of Dhakhushub to watch the result of repentance again advanced like a flood and spread over the streets of Medina and closing the borders from every side, surrounded his house.

During these days of siege a companion of the Prophet (ص), Niyar ibn AIyad, desired to talk to Othman, went to his house and called him. When he peeped out from the above he said, "O Othman, for Allah's sake give up this Caliphate and save the Muslims from this bloodshed. While he was just conversing, one of Othman's men aimed at him with an arrow and killed him, whereupon people were infuriated and shouted that Niyar's killer should be handed over to them. Othman said it was not possible that he would hand over his own support to them. This stubbornness worked like a fan on fire and in the height of fury people set fire to his door and began advancing. When Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa`id ibn al-As and Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas together with their contingents pounced upon the besiegers, killing and bloodshed started at his door. People wanted to enter the house but they were being pushed back. In the meanwhile, Amr ibn Hazm al-Ansari whose house was adjacent to that of Othman opened his door and shouted for advancing from that side. Thus through this house the besiegers climbed on the roof of Othman's house and descended down from the re, drawing their swords. Only a few scuffles had taken place when all except the people of Othman's house, his well-wishers and Banu Umayyah ran away in the streets of Medina and a few hid themselves in the house of Umm Habiba daughter of Abu Sufyan, sister of Mu`awiyah. The rest were killed with Othman as the latter kept defending himself to the last (Al-Tabaqat, Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 3,

Part 1, pp. 50-58; Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 2998-3025; Al-Kamil, Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, pp. 167-180; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 2, pp. 144-161).

At his killing, several poets wrote eulogies. A couplet from the elegy by Abu Hurayra is presented:

Today people have only one grief, but I have two:
The loss of my money bag and the killing of Othman.

After observing these events, the status of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) became clear, namely that he was neither supporting the group that was instigating Othman's killing nor could he be included among those who stood for his support and defense. Rather, when he saw that what was said was not acted upon he kept aloof.

When both parties are looked at among the people who had raised their hands from Othman's support, Aisha is seen as one. And according to the popular versions (which are not right), the then living persons out of the ten pre-informed ones (who had been pre-informed in this world by the Prophet (ص) as being admitted into Paradise), out of those who took part in the consultative committee (formed for Othman's selection for caliphate) Ansar, original Muhajirun, people who took part in the battle of Badr and other conspicuous and dignified individuals, while on the side (of Othman) are seen only a few slaves of the Caliph and a few individuals from Banu Umayyah. If people like Marwan and Sa'id ibn al-As cannot be given precedence over the original Muhajirun, their actions, too, cannot be given precedence over the actions of the latter. Again, if ijma' (consensus of opinion) is not meant for particular occasions... only then it would be difficult to question this overwhelming unanimity of the companions.

Sermon 31

Delivered Before the Commencement of the Battle of Jamal

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent Abdullah ibn Abbas to az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam with the purpose that he should advise him to obey. He said the following to him on that occasion:

Do not meet Talhah (ibn Ubaydillah). If you meet him you will find him like an unruly bull whose horns are turned towards its ears. He rides a ferocious riding beast and says it has been tamed. Instead, meet with az-Zubayr because he is soft-tempered. Tell him that your maternal

cousin says that, A(It looks as if) in the Hijaz you knew me (accepted me), but (on coming here to) Iraq you do not know me (do not accept me). So, what has dissuaded (you) from what was shown (by you previously)?

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "The last sentence of this sermon, i.e. Fama `ada minna bada, has been heard only from Amir al-Mu'minin (ع)."

Sermon 32

About the Disparagement of the World and Categories of its People

O people! We have been born in such a wrongful and thankless period wherein the virtuous is deemed vicious and the oppressor goes on advancing in his excess. We do not make use of what we know and do not discover what we do not know. We do not fear calamity till it befalls.

People are of four categories. Among them is one who is prevented from mischief only by his low status, lack of means and paucity of wealth.

Then there is he who has drawn his sword, openly commits mischief, has collected his horsemen and foot-man and has devoted himself to securing wealth, leading troops, rising on the pulpit and has allowed his faith to perish. How bad is the transaction that you allow, (enjoyment of) this world to be a price for yourself as an alternative for what there is with Allah for you.

And among them is he who seeks (benefits of) this world through actions meant for the next world, but does not seek (good of) the next world through actions of this world. He keeps his body calm (in dignity), raises small steps, holds up his clothe s, embellishes his body for appearance of trust-worthiness and uses the status of Allah's connivance as a means of committing sins.

Then there is one whose weakness and lack of means have held him back from conquest of lands. This keeps down his status and he has named it contentment and he clothe s himself with the robe of renunciation although he has never had any connection with these qualities.

Then there remain a few people in whose case the remembrance of their return (to Allah on the Last Day) keeps their eyes bent and the fear of resurrection moves their tears. Some of them are scared away (from the world) and dispersed. Some are frightened and subdued; some are quiet as if muzzled; some are praying sincerely. Some are grief-stricken and pain-ridden whom fear has confined to namelessness and disgrace has shrouded them, so they are in (The sea of) bitter water. Their mouths are closed and their hearts are bruised. They preached till they were tired, they were oppressed till they were disgraced and they were killed till they remained few in number.

The world in your eyes should be smaller than the bark of the acacia and the clippings of wool. Seek instruction from those who preceded you before those who follow you take instruction from you and keep aloof from it realizing its evil because it cuts off even from those who were more attached to it than you.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Some ignorant persons attributed this sermon to Mu`awiyah but it is the speech of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع). There should be no doubt about it. What comparison is there between gold and clay or sweet and bitter water." This has been pointed out by the skillful guide and the expert critic `Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz as he has mentioned this sermon in his book, Al-Bayan wal-Tbyin (Vol. 2, pp. 59-61). He has also mentioned who attributed it to Mu`awiyah then states that it is most akin to be the speech of Ali and most in accord with his way of categorizing people and information about their oppression, disgrace, apprehension and fear. (On the other hand) we never found Mu`awiyah speaking on the lives of those who renounce this world or worshippers.

Sermon 33

Abdullah ibn Abbas says that when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) set out to fight the people of Basra, he came to his audience at Thi-Qar and saw that Abdullah [ibn Abbas] was stitching his shoe. Then Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said to me, "What is the price of this shoe?" I said: "It has no value now." He then said, "By Allah! It should have been more dear to me than ruling over you except for the fact that I have established right and warded off wrong." Then the Imam (ع) came out and spoke thus:

Verily, Allah sent Muhammad (ص) when none among the Arabs read a book or claimed Prophethood. He guided the people till he took them to their (correct) status and their salvation and their spears (ie. officers) became straight and their conditions settled down.

By Allah, surely I was in their lead till it took shape with its walls. I did not show weakness or cowardice. My existing march is also like that. I shall certainly pierce the wrong till right comes out of its side.

What (cause of conflict) is there between the tribesmen of Quraish and me? By Allah, I have fought them when they were unbelievers and I shall fight them when they have been misled. I shall be the same for them today as I was for them yesterday.

By Allah, the tribesmen of Quraish only take revenge against us because Allah has given us (i.e. The Holy Prophet (ص) and his progeny) preference over them. So, we have allowed them into our domain, whereupon they have become as the former poet says the following:

> By my life, you continued drinking fresh milk every morning,
> And (continued) eating fine stoned dates with butter;
> We have given you the nobility which you did not possess before;
> And surrounded (protected) you with thoroughbred horses and tawny colored spears (strong spears).

The fact is that the poet's aim here is to say that the condition of the addressee's life, from the moral and material point of view, had been worse in the past and that the poet and his tribe had given him the best means of leading their lives. But as the result of this improved condition the addressee has completely lost himself and forgotten his past condition and thinks that he had led this kind of life before.

Now, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) wants to convey the same idea here to the tribesmen of Quraish as Fatima (ع) the holy daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص) said in her speech on Fadak:

(O People!) You were on the brink of the pit of Hill Fire (Holy Quran, 3: 103). You were as worthless as themouthful of water. You were of a minority like the handful of greedy and a spark of the hasty. You were as down-trodden as the dust under your feet. You drank dirty water.

You ate untanned skin. You were abased and condemned. But Allah has rescued you through my father Muhammad (ص).

Sermon 34

To Prepare the People for Fighting with the People of Syria (Ash-sham) Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said:

Woe unto you! I am tired of rebuking you. Do you accept this worldly life in place of the next life? Or disgrace in place of dignity? When I invite you to fight your enemy your eyes revolve as though you are in the clutches of death and in the senselessness of last moments. My pleadings are not understood by you and you remain stunned. It is as though your hearts are affected with madness so that you do not understand. You have lost my confidence for good. Neither are you a support for me to lean upon nor a means to honor and victory. Your example is that of the camels whose protector has disappeared, so that if they are collected from one side they disperse away from the other side.

By Allah, how bad are you for igniting flames of war. You are intrigued against but do not intrigue (against the enemy). Your boundaries are decreasing but you do not get enraged over it. Those against you do not sleep but you are unmindful. By Allah, those who leave matters one for the other are subdued. By Allah, I believed about you that if battle rages and death hovers around you, you will cut away from son of Abu Talib like the severing of head from the trunk.[132]

By Allah, he who makes it possible for his adversary to so overpower him as to remove the flesh (from his bones), crush his bones and cut his skin into pieces, then it means that his helplessness is great and that his heart surrounded within the sides of his chest is weak. You may become like this if you wish. But for me, before I allow it I shall use my sharp-edged swords of al-Mushrafiyyah which would cut under the bones of the head and cause arms and feet to fly. Thereafter, Allah will do whatever He wills.

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[132]Ash-Sham was a name used for a vast geographical area occupied by Muslims in those days. This area included present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. Its capital was Damascus. Wherever the word Syria is mentioned (in this book), it should be understood in its larger geographical context.

O people! I have a right over you and you have a right over me. As for your right over me, that is to counsel you, to pay your dues fully, to teach you that you may not remain ignorant and instruct you in acceptable behavior that you may act upon. As for my right over you, it is fulfillment of (the obligation of) allegiance, well-wishing in presence or in absence, response when I call you and obedience when I order you.[133]

Sermon 35

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Delivered this Sermon after the Arbitration

All praise is due to Allah even though time has brought (to us) crushing calamity and great occurrence. And I testify that there is no god but Allah the One, there is no partner for Him nor is there with Him any god other than Himself and that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and Prophet (ص).

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[133]This sentence is employed for such severance after which there is no occasion or possibility of joining. The author of *Al-Durra al-Najafiyya* has quoted several views in its explanation:

i. Ibn Durayd's view is that it means that, AJust as when the head is severed its joining again is impossible. In the same way as you will not join me after once deserting me.

ii. Al-Mufaddal says *ar-ra's* (head) was the name of a man and a village of Syria, *Bayt ar-ra's* is named after him. This man left his home and went away somewhere and never again returned to his village after which the proverb sprang up Ayou went as *ar-ra's* had gone.

iii. One meaning of it is that "Just as if the joints of the bones of the head are opened, they cannot be restored, likewise, you will not rejoin me after cutting yourselves away from me."

iv. It has also been said that this sentence is in the sense of separating completely. After copying this meaning from the *Sharh* of Shaikh Qutbud-Dīn ar-Rāwandi, the commentator Ibn Abul-Hadīd has written that this meaning is not correct because when the word *ar-ra's* is used in this sense of whole it is not preceded by *alif* and *lam*.

v. It is also taken to mean that "You will so run away from me as one (fleeing for life) to save his head. Besides this, one or two other meanings have also been stated but being remote they are disregarded."

First of all it was used by the philosopher of Arabia Aktham ibn Sayfi while teaching unity and concord to his children. He says the following:

"O my children! Do not cut away (from each other) at the time of calamities like the cutting of the head because after that you will never get together."

So now, certainly the disobedience of a sympathetic counselor who has knowledge as well as experience brings about disappointment and that results in repentance. I had given you my orders about this arbitration and put before you my hidden view that if Qasir's[2] orders were fulfilled but you rejected it (my orders) like rough opponents and disobedient insurgents till the counselor himself fell in doubt about his counsel and the flint (of his wit) ceased to give flame. Consequently, my status and yours became as the poet of Hawazin says the following:

I gave you my orders at Mun'arajil-Liwa' but you did not see the good of my counsel till the noon of next day (when it was too late).

When the Syrians' spirit was broken by the bloody swords of the Iraqis and the incessant attacks of the night of al-Harir lowered their morale and ended their aspirations, Amr ibn al-As suggested to Mu`awiyah the trick that the Holy Quran should be raised on spears and shouts urged forth to treat it as the arbitrator. Its effect would be that some people would try to stop the war and others would like to continue it. We would thus divide them and be able to get the war postponed for another occasion. Consequently, copies of the Holy Quran were raised on spears. The result was that some brainless persons raised hue and cry and created division and disturbance in the army and the efforts of simple Muslims turned slow after having been near victory. Without understanding anything they began to shout that they should prefer the verdict of the Holy Quran over war.

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) saw the Holy Quran being the instrument of their activities, he said:

O people! Do not fall in this trap of deceit and trickery. They are putting up this device only to escape the ignominy of defeat. I know the character of each one of them. They are neither adherents of the Holy Quran nor have they any connection with the faith or religion. The very purpose of our fighting has been that they should follow the Holy Quran and act on its injunctions. For Allah's sake do not fall in their deceitful device. Go ahead with determination and courage and stop only after vanquishing the dying foe. Nevertheless, the deceitful instrument of wrong had worked.

People took to disobedience and rebellion. Mis`ar ibn Fadaki at-Tamimi and Zayd ibn Hussain at-Ta'i, each with twenty thousand men, came forward and said to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) "O Ali! If you do not

respond to the call of the Holy Quran, we will deal with you in the same manner as we did with Othman. You end the battle at once and bow before the verdict of the Holy Quran [is issued against you].” Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) tried his best to make them understand the trick, but Satan was standing before them pretending to wear the garb of the Holy Quran. He did not allow them to do so and they compelled Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) that he should send someone to call Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar from the battlefield. Being obliged, Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) sent Yazid ibn Hani to call Malik back. When Malik heard this order he was bewildered and said, “Please tell him this is not the occasion to leave the status. He may wait a bit then I will come to his audience with the tidings of victory. Hani conveyed this message on return but people shouted that Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) must have sent word to him secretly to continue.” Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) said he never got any occasion to send any secret message to him. Whatever he said was said before them. People said he should be sent again and that if Malik delayed his return Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) should forsake his life. Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) again sent Yazid ibn Hani and sent word that rebellion had occurred, he should return in whatever condition he was. So Hani went and told Malik “You hold victory dear or the life of Amir al-Mu’minin (ع). If his life is dear you should raise your hands from the battle and go to him. Leaving the chances of victory Malik stood up and came to the audience of Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) with grief and disappointment.” The Aws raged there. He rebuked the people very much but matters had taken such a turn that they could not be corrected.

It was then settled that either party should nominate an arbitrator so that they should settle the Caliphate matter according to the Holy Quran. From Mu`awiyah’s side `Amr ibn al-`}s was decided upon and from Amir al-Mu’minin’s side people proposed the name of Abu Musa al-Ash`ari. Seeing this wrong selection Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) said, “Since you have not accepted my order about arbitration at least now agree that do not make Abu Musa the arbitrator. He is not a man of trust. Here is Abdullah ibn Abbas and here is Malik al-Ashtar. Select one of them. But they did not listen to him and stuck to his name (Abu Musa).” Amir al-Mu’minin (ع) said, “Alright, do whatever you want. The day is not far when you will cut your own hands through your misdeeds.”

After the nomination of arbitrators, when the deed of agreement was being written, the name of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was also written. `Amr ibn al-As said, “This should be rubbed off. If we regard Amir al-

Mu'minin (ع), why should this battle have been fought?" At first, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) refused to rub it off but when they did not in any way agree, he rubbed it off and said, "This incident is just similar to the one at al-Hudaybiya when the unbelievers stuck on the point that the words AProphet (ص) of Allah' with the name of the Prophet (ص) should be removed and the Prophet (ص) did remove it." On this, Amr ibn al-As got angry and said, "Do you treat us as unbelievers." Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) asked, "On what day have you had anything to do with believers and when have you been their supporters?" However, after this settlement, the people dispersed and after mutual consultation these two arbitrators decided that by removing both Ali and Mu`awiyah from the Caliphate the people should be accorded the power to choose whomever they desired. When time came to its announcement there was a meeting at Dawmatul-Jandal, a place between Iraq and Syria then the two arbitrators also reached there to announce the judgement on the fate of the Muslims. Acting cunningly `Amr ibn al-`}s said to Abu Musa, "I regard it ill manner to precede you. You are older in years and age; so, first you make the announcement yourself." Abu Musa succumbed to his flattery and came out proudly. Standing before the gathering, he addressed them thus: "O Muslims! We have jointly settled that Ali ibn Abu Talib and Mu`awiyah should be removed and the right to choose a Caliph be accorded to the Muslims. They should choose whomever they like." Saying this he sat down. Now the turn was for `Amr ibn al-`}s and he said, "O Muslims! You have heard that Abu Musa has removed `Amr ibn Abu Talib; I also agree with it. As for Mu`awiyah, there is no question of removing him. Therefore, I place him in his status." No sooner than he said this there were cries all around. Abu Musa cried hoarse that it was a trick, a deceit and said to `Amr ibn al-As, "You have played a trick and your example is that of a dog on which if you load something he would gasp, or leave him, he would gasp." Amr ibn al-As said, "Your example is like the ass on whom books are loaded." However, `Amr ibn al-`}s trick was effective and Mu`awiyah's shaking feet were again stabilized.

The above is a short sketch of the Arbitration whose basis was laid in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. But was it a verdict of the Holy Quran or the result of those deceitful contrivances which people of this world always employ to retain their authority? Could these pages of history be made a torch-guide for the future and the Holy Quran and Sunnah not be used as a means of securing authority or as an instrument of worldly benefits?

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) got the news of this lamentable result of arbitration, he climbed on the pulpit and delivered this sermon every word of which savors his grief and sorrow and at the same time it throws light on soundness of his thinking, correctness of his opinion and foresighted sagacity.

A proverb is used in this sermon borrowed from an occasion where the advice of a counselor is rejected and afterwards it is repented. The fact is that the ruler of Hira, namely Jazimah al-Abrash, killed the ruler of Jazira, `Amr ibn Zarib. Thereafter, his daughter Zabba was made the ruler of Jazira. Soon after accession to the throne, she thought out a plan to avenge her father's blood. Then she sent a message to Jazīmah that she could not alone carry on the affairs of the state and that if he could become her patron by accepting her as his wife, she would be grateful. Jazīmah was more than puffed up at this marriage proposal and prepared himself to set off for Jazira with a thousand horsemen. His slave, Qasir, advised him repeatedly that this was just a sign of deceit and trickery, and that he should not place himself in this danger, but his wit had been so blinded that he could not think over why Zabba should select the murderer of her father as her life's companion. He then set off and reached the border of Jazira. Although Zabba's army was present for his reception. she neither gave any special reception nor offered him a warm welcome. Seeing this state, Qasir was again suspicious; he advised Jazīmah to get back, but nearness to the goal had further fanned his passion. Jazimah paid no heed and, stepping further, entered the city. Soon after his arrival, he was killed there then. When Qasir saw this he said, "Had the advice of Qasir been followed... etc. Since then, this proverb gained currency."

The poet of Hawazin referred to in this sermon is Durayd ibn as-Simmah. He wrote the above-cited couplet after the death of his brother Abdullah ibn as-Simmah. Its facts are that `Abdullah, along with his brother, led an attack of two groups of Banu Jusham and Banu Nasr who were both from Hawazin and drove away many camels. On return when they intended to rest at Mun`arajil-Liwa, Durayd said it was not advisable to stay there lest the enemy attacks from behind, but Abdullah did not agree and stayed the re. The result was that as soon as dawn appeared the enemy attacked and killed `Abdullah on the spot. Durayd also received wounds but he slipped away alive and after this he wrote a few couplets out of which one couplet is this wherein he has referred to the destruction resulting from his advice having been rejected.

Sermon 36

Warning the People of Nahrawan of Their Fate

I am warning you that you will be killed on the bend of this canal and on the levee of this low area while you will have no clear excuse before Allah nor any open authority with you. You have come out of your houses then the Divine decree entangled you. I had advised you against this arbitration but you rejected my advice like adversaries and opponents till I turned my ideas in the direction of your wishes. You are a group whose heads are devoid of wit and intelligence. May you have no father! (Allah's woe be to you!) I have not put you in any calamity nor wished you harm.

The cause of the battle of Nahrawan dated back to the time following the arbitration when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was returning to Kufa. The people who were foremost in pleading acceptance of arbitration began to say that appointment of anyone other than Allah as arbitrator is heresy and that, Allah forbid, by accepting the arbitration Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had become a heretic. Consequently, by distorting the meaning of "There is no authority save with Allah they made simple Muslims share their view and separated from Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) encamped at Hanira' near Kafa." When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) learned of this plot, he sent Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-Abdi and Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi in the company of Ibn Abbas toward them and afterwards he went to the place of their stay and dispersed them after discussion.

When these people reached Kufa they began to spread thenews that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had broken the agreement of arbitration and that he was again ready to fight against the Syrians. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) learned this, he contradicted it whereupon these people stood up in rebellion and encamped twelve miles from Baghdad in the lowlands area of the canal called Nahrawan.

On the other side, after hearing the verdict of arbitration Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) prepared to fight the army of Syria. He wrote to the Kharijites that the verdict passed by the two arbitrators in pursuance of their heart's wishes instead of the Holy Quran and Sunnah was not acceptable to him and he, therefore, decided to fight with them and they should support him in crushing the enemy. But the Kharijites gave him this reply, "When you had agreed to arbitration in our view you had

turned heretic. Now if you admit your heresy and offer repentance we will think over this matter and decide what we should do." Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) understood from their reply that their disobedience and misguidance had become very serious. To entertain any kind of hope from them now was futile. Consequently, ignoring them, he encamped in the valley of an-Nukhaylah with a view to marching towards Syria. When the army had been arrayed he came to know that the men desired to deal with the people of Nahrawan first and to move towards Syria afterwards. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), however, said that they should be left as they were, that they themselves should first move towards Syria while the people of Nahrawan could be dealt with afterwards. People said that they were prepared to obey every order of his with all their might whether he moved this way or that way. The army had not moved when news about the rebellion of Kharijites began to reach them. Then it was learned that they had butchered the governor of Nahrawan,'Abdullah ibn Khabbab ibn al-Aratt and his slave maid with the child in her womb and had killed three women of Banu Tay and Umm Sinan al-Saydawi. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent al-Harith ibn Murrah al-Abdi to investigate but he too was killed by them. When their rebellion reached this stage it was necessary to deal with them. Consequently, the army turned towards Nahrawan. On reaching there Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent them word that those who had killed Abdullah ibn Khabbab ibn al-Aratt and innocent women should be handed over to him for avenging blood. Those people replied that they had killed these persons jointly and that they considered it lawful to shed the blood of all the people on his side. Even at this Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) did not take the initiative for the battle, but sent Abu Ayyub al-Ansari with a message of peace. So he spoke to them aloud, "Whoever comes under this banner or separates from that party and goes to Kufa or al-Mada'in would get amnesty and he would not be questioned." As a result of this, Farwah ibn Nawfal al-Ashja`i said that he did not know why they were at war with Amir al-Mu'minin (ع). Saying this, he separated along with five hundred men. Similarly, one group after another began to separate and some of them joined Amir al-Mu'minin (ع). Those who remained numbered four thousand and according to al-Tabari's account they numbered two thousand eight hundred. Yet, these people were not in any way prepared to listen to the voice of truth and were ready to kill or be killed. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had stopped his men from taking the initiative but the Kharijites put arrows in their bows and broke and threw away the sheathe s of their swords. Even at this juncture Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) warned them of the dire consequences of war and this sermon is about that warning and admonition. But they were brimming

with enthusiasm so much that they leapt on Amir al-Mu'minin's force all of a sudden. This onslaught was so severe that the footmen lost ground but they soon fixed themselves so firmly that the attack of arrows and spears could not dislodge them from their status. They soon cleared away the Kharijites that except for nine persons who fled to save their lives, not a single person was left alive. From Amir al-Mu'minin's army only eight persons fell as martyrs. The battle took place on the 9th Safar, 38 A.H.

Sermon 37

Amir Al-Mu'minin's Utterance Which Runs like a Sermon about His Own Steadfastness in Religion and Precedence in (Acceptance of) Conviction.

I discharged duties when others lost courage (to do so) and I came forward when others hid themselves. I spoke when others remained mum. I struck with the Divine light when others remained standing. I was the quietest of them in voice but the highest in going forward. I cleaved to its rein and applied myself solely to its pledge, like the mountain which neither sweeping wind could move nor storm could shake. No one could find fault with me nor could any speaker speak ill of me.

The low is in my view worthy of honor till I secure (his) right for him while the strong is in my view weak till I take their (assumed) right from them. We are happy with the destiny ordained by Allah and have submitted to the command of Allah. Do you think I would speak lies about the Prophet of Allāh (ص)? By Allah, I am surely the first to testify of him, so I will not be the first to falsify him. I looked at my affairs and found that my obedience should have precedence over my allegiance while my pledge to him is a burden on my neck.

Sermon 38

About the Naming of Doubt as Such and Disparagement of Those in Doubt:

Doubt is named doubt because it resembles truth. As for lovers of Allah, their conviction serves them as light and the direction of the right path (itself) serves as their guide; while the enemies of Allah, in time of doubt call to misguidance in the darkness of doubt and their guide is blindness (of intelligence). One who fears death cannot escape it nor one who fears for eternal life secure it.

Sermon 39

In Disparagement of Those Who Shrink from Fighting

I am faced with men who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call them. May you have no father (Woe unto you!) What are you waiting for to rise in the cause of Allah? Does not faith join you together, or sense of shame rouse you? I stand among you shouting and I am calling you for help, but you do not listen to my word and do not obey my orders, till circumstances show their bad consequences. No blood can be avenged through you and no purpose can be achieved with you. I called you to help your brethren but (instead) you made noises like the camel having pain in the stomach and became loose like the camel with a thin back. Then a wavering weak contingent came to me from among you: "as if they are being led to death and they are only watching[134] (Holy Quran, 8: 6).

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[134]Mu`awiyah sent a contingent of two thousand soldiers under an-Nu'm an ibn Bashir to assault Aynu't-Tamr. This place was a defence base of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) near Kufa in which Malik ibn Ka`b al-Arhabi was in charge. Although there were a thousand combatants under him, at that moment, only a hundred men were present. When Malik noticed the offensive force advancing, he wrote to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) for help. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) received the message he asked the people for his help but only three hundred men got ready. As a result Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was much disgusted and delivered this sermon in their admonition. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) reached his house after delivering the sermon, Adiy ibn Hatim at-Ta'i came and said, "O Amir a-Mu'minin a thousand men of Banu Tayyi' are under me. If you say I shall send them off. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "It does not look good that people of only one tribe should meet the enemy. You prepare your force in the Valley of an-Nukhayla. Accordingly, he went there and called people to *jihad*, where, besides Banu Tay, one thousand other combatants also assembled. They were still preparing to set off when word reached from Malik ibn Ka`b that there was no need for help as he had repulsed the enemy.

The reason for this was that Malik had hastily sent `Abdullah ibn Hawalah al-Azdi off to Qarazah ibn Ka`b al-Ansari and Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym al-Azdi, so that if there was delay in the arrival of support from Kufa he could get help from here in time. Abdullah went to both, but got no help from Qarazah. However, Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym had gotten fifty persons ready under Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mikhnaf and they arrived near evening. Until that time, the two thousand men (of the enemy) had not been able to subdue the hundred men of Mālik. When an-Nu'man saw these fifty men he thought that their forces had started coming in so he fled from the

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Amir al-Mu'minin's word Amutadha'ib means Amudtarib (i.e. moved or troubled), as they say Atadha' abat ar-rih (i.e. The winds blow in troubled manner). Similarly the wolf is called Adhi'b because of its troubled movement.

Sermon 40

When Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Heard the Cry of Kharijites That Verdict Is Only That of Allah, He Said:

The statement is right, but what (they think) it means is wrong. It is true that verdict lies but with Allah, but these people say that (the function of) governance is only for Allah. The fact is that there is no escape for men from rulers—good or bad. The faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. During the rule, Allah would carry everything to end. Through the ruler tax is collected, the enemy is fought, roadways are protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoy peace and allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked.

Another version of the same sermon:

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) heard the cry of the Khirijites on the aforementioned verdict he said: "I am expecting the verdict (destiny) of Allah on you. Then he went on to say, As for good government, the pious man performs good deeds in it, while in a bad government the wicked person enjoys till his time is over and death overtakes him.

SERMON 41

Condemning Treason

O people! Surely the fulfillment of a pledge is the twin of truth. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realizes the reality of return (to the next world) refuses (submission to the dynamic of) betrayal. We are in a period when most of the people regard betrayal as wisdom. In these days the ignorant call it excellence of cunning. What is the matter with them? Allah may destroy them. One

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battlefield. Even in their retreat, Malik attacked them from rear and killed three of their men.

who has been through the thick and thin of life finds the excuses to be preventing him from acquiescing to the orders and prohibitions of Allah. Yet he disregards them despite the capability (to succumb to them and follows the commands of Allah), while one who has no restraints of religion seizes the opportunity (and accepts the excuses for not following the commands of Allah).

Sermon 42

About Heart's Desires and Extended Hopes

O people what I fear most about you are two things - acting according to desires and the extending of hopes. Acting according to (personal) desires prevents (the experiential admission of) truth; regarding extensive hope, it makes one forget the next world. You should know this world is moving rapidly and nothing has remained out of it except the last particles like the dregs of a vessel which has been emptied by some one. Beware, the next world is advancing and either of them has sons i.e. followers. You should become sons of the next world and not become sons of this world because on the Day of Judgement every son would cling to his mother. Today is the Day of action and there is no reckoning while tomorrow is the Day of reckoning wherein there would be no (opportunity for) action.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Al-hadhadha means rapid, but some people have read it jadhdha. According to this version, the meaning, it could be that the cycle of worldly enjoyments would end soon.

Sermon 43

After Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Had Sent Jarir Ibn Abdillah Al-bajali to Mu`awiyah (For Securing His Oath of Allegiance), Some of His Companions Suggested Preparation to Fight with Him. Then He Said:

My preparation for war with the people of Syria while Jarir ibn Abdillah al-Bajali is still there would be closing the door on Syria and thereby preventing its people from a good action (i.e. allegiance) if that indeed was their intention. However, I have fixed a time limit of Jarir after which he would not stay without either deception or in disobedience.

My opinion is in favor of patience, so wait a while. (In the meantime) I do not dislike your preparation.

I have observed this matter thoroughly from all sides but I do not find any way except war or heresy. Certainly, there was a ruler over the people (before me) who brought about new (un-Islamic) things and compelled the people to speak out. So they did speak, then rose and changed the whole system.

Sermon 44

Masqalah Ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani Fled to Mu`awiyah Because He Had Purchased Some Prisoners of Banū Najiyah from an Executive of Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع), but When He Demanded the Price, the Latter Avoided and Ran to Syria. Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said:

May Masqalah be condemned. He acted like the noble but fled like a slave. Before his admirer could speak (about him) he silenced him and before his eulogist could testify to his good deeds he closed his mouth. If he had stayed behind we would have taken from him what he could easily pay and waited for the balance till his money increased.

Following the "arbitration", the Kharijites rose in defiance. A Kharijite man of Banu Najiyah named al-Khirrit ibn Rashid an-Naji began instigating people and set off towards al-Mada'in with a group killing and marauding. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent Ziyad ibn Khasafah with three hundred men to check him. When the two forces met at al-Mada'in they attacked each other with swords. Only one encounter or so had taken place when the gloom of evening prevailed and the battle had to be stopped. When morning appeared Ziyad's men noticed that five dead bodies of the Kharijites were lying and they themselves had cleared off the battlefield. Seeing this Ziyad set off for Basra along with his men. There he came to know that the Kharijites had gone to Ahwaz. Ziyad did not move onwards for paucity of force and informed Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) of it. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) called back Ziyad and sent Ma`qil ibn Qays ar-Riyahi with two thousand experienced combatants towards Ahwaz and wrote to the governor of Basra `Abdullah ibn Abbas to send two thousand swordsmen of Basra for the help of Ma`qil. Consequently, the contingent from Basra also joined them at Ahwaz and after proper organization, they got ready to attack the enemy. But al-Khirrit marched

on along with his men to the hills of Ramhurmuz. These people also followed him and overtook him near these hills. Both arrayed their forces and started attacking each other. The result of this encounter was that three hundred and seventy Kharijites were killed in the battlefield while the rest ran away. Ma`qil informed Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) of his performance and of the enemy's defeat when Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) directed him to chase them and to disintegrate their power so that they should not be able to raise heads again. On receipt of this order, Ma`qil moved on and overtook him on the coast of the Persian Gulf, where al-Khirrit had by persuasion secured the cooperation of the people and enlisting men from here and the re, had collected a considerable force. When Ma`qil reached the re, he raised the flag of peace and announced that those who had collected from here and there should flee. They would not be assaulted. The effect of this announcement was that save for al-Khirrit's own community all others deserted him. He organized those very men and commenced the battle but valorous combatants of Basra and Kufa displayed such excellent use of swords that in a short time one hundred and seventy men of the insurgents were killed while an-Nu'man ibn Suhban ar-Rasibi encountered al-Khirrit (ibn Rashid an-Naji) and eventually attacked and killed him. Soon after his fall the enemy lost ground an d they fled from the battlefield. Thereafter, Ma`qil collected all themen, women and children from their camps at one place. From among them those who were Muslims were released after swearing allegiance. Those who had turned heretics were called upon to re-embrace their Submission to the Will of Allah (Islam). Consequently all except one old Christian secured their release by accepting Islam but the old man was killed. Then, Ma`qil took with him those Christians of Banu Najiyah who had taken part in this rebellion together with their families. When Ma`qil reached Ardashir Khurrah (a city of Iran) these prisoners wailed and cried before its governor Masqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani and beseeched in all humility to do something for their release. Masqalah sent word to Ma`qil through Dhuhl ibn al-Harith to sell these prisoners to him. Ma`qil agreed and sold those prisoners to him for five hundred thousand Dirhams and told him to dispatch the price immediately to Amir al-Mu'minin (ع). He said that he was sending the first installment at once and the remaining installments would also be sent soon. When Ma`qil met Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) he related the whole event before him. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) ratified this action and waited for the price for some time, but Masqalah observed such deep silence as if nothing was due from him. At last Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent a messenger to him with word to either send the price or to come himself. On Amir al-Mu'minin's order he came

to Kufa and on demand of the price paid two hundred thousand Dirhams. But, to evade the balance he went to Mu`awiyah, who made him the governor of Tabaristan. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) came to know all this he spoke these words (as in this sermon). Its sum total is that: Had he stayed, we would have been considerate to him in demanding the price and would have waited for an improvement of his financial condition. But he fled like slaves after displaying a showy act. Talk about his high perseverance had just started when people began to discuss his baseless and lowliness.

Sermon 45

About Allah's Greatness and the Lowliness of this World

Praise is due to Allah from Whose mercy no one loses hope, from Whose bounty no one is deprived, from Whose forgiveness no one is disappointed and for Whose worship no one is too high. His mercy never ceases and His bounty is never missed.

This world is a place for which destruction is ordained and departure, for its inhabitants, is destined. It is sweet and green. It hastens towards its seeker and attaches to the heart of the viewer. So depart from here with the best of provision available with you and do not ask herein more than what is enough and do not demand from it more than subsistence.

Sermon 46

When Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Decided to March Towards Syria, He Made These Statements:

Lord! I seek Your protection from the hardships of the journey, from the grief of returning and from the scene of devastation of property and men. O Allah, You are the companion in journey and You are one who is left behind for (protection of the) family. None except You can join these two because one who is left behind cannot be a companion on a journey nor one who is in company on a journey at the same time can be left behind.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: The earlier part of his sermon is related from the Prophet (ص) but Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has completed

it very aptly by adding most eloquent sentences at the end. This addition is from ANone except You can join up to the end.

Sermon 47

About Calamities Befalling Kufa:

O Kufa! It is as though I see you being drawn like the tanned leather of `Ukazi[135] in the market. You are being scraped by calamities and being ridden by severe troubles. I certainly[136] know that if any tyrant intends evil for you Allah will afflict him with worry and fling him with a killer (set someone on him to kill him).

Sermon 48

Delivered at the Time of Marching Towards Syria.

Praise is due to Allah when night spreads and darkens and praise be to Allah whenever the star shines and sets. And praise be to Allah Whose bounty never misses and whose favors cannot be repaid.

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[135]During pre-Islamic days, a market used to be organized every year near Mecca. Its name was `Ukaz where mostly hides were traded and as a result, leather was attributed to it. Besides the sales and purchases, literary meetings were also arranged and Arabs used to attract admiration by reciting their works. After Islam because of the better congregation in the form of Hajj, this market diminished.

[136]This prediction of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) was fulfilled word for word and the world saw how the people who had committed tyranny and oppression on the strength of their masterly power had to face the tragic end. The ways of their own destruction were engendered by their blood-shedding and homicidal activities. Consequently, the end of Ziyad ibn Abih (son of an unknown father) was that when he intended to deliver a speech for vilification of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) suddenly paralysis overtook him and he could not get out of his bed. The end of the bloodshed perpetrated by Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad was when he fell prey to leprosy and eventually blood thirsty swords put him to death. The ferocity of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi drove him to the fate that snakes cropped up in his stomach as a result of which he died after severe pain. `Umar ibn Hubayrah al-Fizari died of leucoderma. Khalid ibn Abdillah al-Qasri suffered the hardships of prison and was killed in a very bad way. Mis'ab ibn az-Zubayr and Yazid ibn al-Muhallab ibn Abu Sufrah were also killed by swords.

Well, I have sent forward my vanguard[137] and have ordered them to remain in the camp on this bank of the river till my order reaches them. My intention is that I should cross this water over to the small habitation of people residing on the sides of the Tigris and rouse them to march with you towards the enemy and keep them as an auxiliary force for you.

Sermon 49

About Allah's Greatness and Sublimity

Praise be to Allah Who lies inside all hidden things and towards Whom all open things are guided. He cannot be seen by the eye of an onlooker, but the eye which does not see Him cannot deny Him while the mind that proves His existence cannot perceive Him. He is so high in sublimity that nothing can be more sublime than He, while in nearness, He is so near that no one can be nearer than He. But his sublimity does not put Him at a distance from anything of His creation, nor does His nearness bring them on equal level to Him. He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing any essential knowledge of Him. He is such that all signs of existence testify for Him till the denying mind also believes in Him. Allah is sublime beyond what is described by those who liken Him to things or those who deny Him.

Sermon 50

About Mixing Right With Wrong

The basis of the occurrence of evils are those desires which are acted upon and the orders that are innovated. They are against the Book of Allah. People cooperate with each other about them even though it is against the religion of Allah. If wrong had been pure and unmixed it would not be hidden from those who are in search of it. And if right had been pure without admixture of wrong those who bear hatred towards it would have been silenced. However, what is done is that something is

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[137]Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: Here by *mitat* Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has meant the direction wherein he had ordered the men to camp and that was the bank of the Euphrates. *Mitat* is used for the bank of a river although its literal meaning is a level ground whereas by *nutfa* he means the water of the Euphrates and these are amazing expressions.

taken from here and something from there and the two are mixed! At this stage Satan overpowers his friends and they alone escape for whom virtue has been apportioned by Allah from before.

Sermon 51

During the Battle of Siffin, the men who were fighting on the side of Mu`awiyah overpowered the men of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), occupying the bank of the River Euphrates and preventing them from having access to its water. It is then that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said the following:

They are asking you for morsels of battle. So, either you remain in ignominy and the lowest status or drench your swords with blood and quench your thirst with water. Real death is living in subjugation, while real life is in dying as subjugators. Beware, Mu`awiyah is leading a small group of insurgents and has kept them in the dark about the true facts with the result that they have made their bosoms the targets of death.

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) had not reached Siffin when Mu`awiyah posted forty thousand of his fighting men on the bank of the river to close the way to the watering place, so that none except the Syrians could take the water. When Amir al-Mu'minin's force alighted the re, they found that there was no watering place except for one possibility. If it existed, it was difficult to reach due to crossing high hillocks. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-Abdi to Mu`awiyah with the request to release control over the water. Mu`awiyah refused. On this side Amir al-Mu'minin's army was troubled by thirst. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) noticed this status he said, "Get up and secure water by dint of the sword." Consequently, these thirsty persons drew their swords out of sheaths, put arrows in their bows and dispersing Mu`awiyah's men, went down toward the river, forcing his guards away. They then took control of the watering place themselves.

Now, Amir al-Mu'minin's men also desired that just as Mu`awiyah had put restrictions on the water by occupation, the same treatment should be accorded to him and his men and no Syrian should be allowed water and everyone of them should be made to die of thirst. But Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) said, "Do you want to take the same brutal step which these Syrians had taken? Never prevent anyone from water. Whoever wants to drink, may drink and whoever wants to take away may

take away." Consequently, despite occupation of the River by Amir al-Mu'minin's army, no one was prevented from the water and everyone was given full liberty to use it.

Sermon 52

This Sermon Has Already Been Cited But, Due to the Difference Between the Two Versions, We Have Quoted it Again Here. Its Subject Is the Downfall of the World and Reward and Punishment in the Hereafter.

Beware! The world is wrapping itself up and has announced its departure. Its known things have become strangers and it is speedily moving backward. It is advancing its inhabitants towards destruction and driving its neighbors towards death. Its sweet things (enjoyments) have become sour and its clear things have become polluted. Consequently, what has remained of it is just like the remaining water in a vessel or a mouthful of water in the measure. If a thirsty person drinks it his thirst shall not be quenched.

O servants of Allah! get ready to go out of this world for whose inhabitants decay is ordained. (Beware) heart's wishes should overpower you, nor should you take your stay (in life) to be long. By Allah, if you cry like the she-camel that has lost its young one or call out like the cooing of pigeons or make noise like devoted recluses and turn to Allah, leaving your wealth and children as a means to secure His nearness and high status with Him or the forgiveness of sins which have been covered by His books and recorded by His angels, it would be less than His reward that I expect for you or His retribution that I fear about you.

By Allah, if your hearts thoroughly melt and your eyes shed tears of blood either in hopes for Him or for fear of Him and, if you are also allowed to live in this world all the time that it lasts, even then, your actions cannot pay for His great bounties over you and His having guided you towards faith.

A portion of the same sermon describing the Feast of Sacrifice (`¦d al-Adha) and the qualities of the animal for sacrifice.

For an animal to be fully fit for sacrifice it is necessary that both its ears be raised upwards and its eyes should be healthy. If the ears and

the eyes are sound the animal of sacrifice is sound and perfect, even though its horn be broken or it drags its feet to the place of sacrifice.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: Here place of sacrifice means place of slaughter.

Sermon 53

On the Oath of Allegiance

They leaped upon me as the camels leap upon each other on their arrival for drinking water, having been let loose after unfastening of their four legs till I thought they would either kill me or kill one another in front of me. I thought over this matter in and out to the extent that it prevented me from sleeping. But I found no way except to fight them or else to reject whatever has been brought by Muhammad (ص). I found that to face war was easier for me than to face the retribution and the hardships of this world were easier than the hardships of the next world.

Sermon 54

When Amir Al-Mu'minin's Showed Impatience on His Delay in Giving Them Permission to Fight in Siffin, He Said:

As for your idea whether this (delay) is due to my unwillingness for death, then by Allah I do not care whether I proceed towards death or death advances towards me. As for your impression that it may be due to my misgivings about the people of Syria, by Allah, I did not put off war even for a day except in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me and see my light with their weak eyes. This is dearer to me than to kill them in the state of this misguidance although they would be bearing their own sins.

Sermon 55

About Steadfastness on the Battlefield

In the company of the Prophet of Allah (ص), we used to fight our parents, sons, brothers and uncles. This continued us in our faith, in submission, in our following the right path, in endurance over the pangs of pain and in our fight against the enemy. A man from our side and one

from the enemy would pounce upon each other like energetic men contesting as to who would kill the other; sometimes our man gets over his adversary and sometimes the enemy's man gets over ours.

When Allah had observed our truth He sent ignominy to our foe and sent His succor to us till Islam was established (like the camel) with its neck on the ground and resting in its place. By my life, if we had also behaved like you, no pillar of (our) religion could have been raised, nor the tree of faith could have borne leaves. By Allah, certainly you will now milk our blood (instead of milk) and eventually you will face shame.[138]

Sermon 56

Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Said the Following to his Companions about Mu`awiyah:

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[138]After Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr had been killed, Mu`awiyah sent Abdullah ibn Amir al-Hadrami to Basra to exhort the people of Basra to avenge Othman's blood because the natural inclination of most of the inhabitants of Basra and particularly Banu Tamim was towards Othman. Consequently, he stayed with Banu Tamim. This was the time when Abdullah ibn Abbas, the governor of Basra had gone to Kufa for condolence about Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, leaving Ziyad ibn Ubayd (Abih) as his substitute. When the atmosphere in Basra began to deteriorate, Ziyad informed Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) of all the facts. Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) tried to get Banu Tamim of Kufa ready but they kept complete silence and gave no reply. When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) saw this weakness and shamelessness on their part he said, "During the days of the Prophet (ص) we did not see whether those killed at our hands were our kith and kin, but whoever collided with Right, we were prepared to collide with him. If we too had acted carelessly or been guilty of inaction like you then neither religion could have taken root nor could Islam prosper. The result of this shaking was that A'yan ibn Dabi'ah al-Mujashi'i prepared himself but on reaching Basra he was killed by the swords of the enemy. Thereafter, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) sent off Jariyah ibn Qudamah as-Sa`di with fifty men of Banu Tamim. First he tried his best to canvass his own tribe but instead of following the right path they stooped to abusing and fighting. Then Jariyah called Ziyad and the tribe of Azd for his help. Soon upon their arrival (`Abdullah) ibn al-Hadrami also came out with his men. Swords were used from both sides for some time but eventually ibn al-Hadrami fled with seventy persons and took refuge in the house of Sabil as-Sa`di. When Jariyah saw no other way he set the house on fire. When the flames arose, they came out in search of safety but could not succeed in running away. Some of them were crushed to death under the wall while others were killed.

Soon after me a man will be placed over you with a broad mouth and a big belly. He will swallow whatever he gets and crave what he does not get. You should kill him but (I know) you will not. He will command you to abuse me and to renounce me. As for abusing me, you will because that would mean purification for me and salvation for you. As regarding renunciation, you should not renounce me because I have been born on the natural religion (Islam) and was foremost in (accepting) it as well as in Hijra (migrating from Mecca to Medina).

About the person to whom Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has alluded in this sermon some people hold that he is Ziyad ibn Abih; some hold that he is Mughirah ibn Shu`bah. But most of the commentators have held him to mean Mu`awiyah and that is correct because the qualities that Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has described prove true on him alone. Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written about the gluttonous quality of Mu`awiyah that once the Prophet (ص) sent for him and he was informed that Mu`awiyah was busy eating. Then the second and the third time a man was sent to call him but he brought the same news. Thereupon, the Prophet (ص) said, "May Allah never satisfy his belly. The effect of this curse was that when he felt tired of eating he would say ATake the food away, for, by Allah I am not satiated but I am tired and disgusted. Similarly, his abusing Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) and ordering his officers for it are accepted facts of history which cannot be denied. In this connection such words were used on the pulpit that even Allah and the Prophet (ص) were hit by them. Thus, Umm al-Mu'minin Umm Salamah wrote to Mu`awiyah, "Certainly you people abuse Allah and the Prophet (ص) as you hurl abuses on Ali and those who love him, while I do testify that Allah and Prophet (ص) did love him."[139]

Thanks to `Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz who put an end to it and introduced the following verse in place of the way abusive of Imam Ali (ع) in the sermons:

Verily Allah enjoins justice and benevolence (to others) by giving to the kindred and forbids lewdness, evil and rebellion; He exhorts you that you may take heed (Holy Quran, 16: 90).

[139] *Al-Iqd al-Farid*, Vol. 3, p. 131.

In this sermon, Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) has ordered his killing on the basis of the Prophet's order that "When you (O Muslims) see Mu`awiyah on my pulpit, kill him."[140]

Sermon 57

Addressing the Kharijites, Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said the Following:

A storm may overtake you while there may be none to awaken you (for reforms). Shall I be a witness to my becoming heretic after the acceptance of faith and fighting in the company of the Prophet (ص)?! AIn that case I shall be misguided and I shall not be on the right path. (Holy Quran, 6: 56). So you should return to your evil places and get back on the traces of your heels. Beware! Certainly, after me, you will meet overwhelming disgrace, sharp swords and traditions that will be adopted by the oppressors as a norm towards you.[141]

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[140]*Siffin*, pp.243, 248; *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha* of Ibn Abul Hadid, Vol. 1, p.348; *Tarīkh Baghdad*, Vol. 12, p.181; *Mizan al-I'tidal*, Vol. 2, p. 128; *Tahthib al-Tahthib*, Vol. 2, p. 428; Vol. 5, p. 110; Vol. 7, p.324.

[141]History corroborates that after Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), the Kharijites had to face all kinds of ignominy and disgrace and wherever they raised their heads to create trouble they were met with swords and spears. Thus Ziyad ibn Abih, Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Mis'ab ibn az-Zubayr and al-Muhallab ibn Abu Sufrah left no stone unturned in annihilating them from the surface of the globe. In particular, al-Muhallab had chased them and routed them thoroughly for nineteen years, resting only after completing their destruction.

Tabari writes that when ten thousand Kharijites collected in Silla wa sillibra (the name of a mountain in Ahwaz) then al-Muhallab faced them so steadfastly that he killed seven thousand Kharijites, while the remaining three thousand fled for their lives towards Kirman. But when the Governor of Iran noticed their rebellious activities he surrounded them in Sabur and killed a good number of them. Those who remained fled to Isfahan and Kirman. From there they again formed a contingent and advanced towards Kufa via Basra. Al-Harith ibn Abu Rabi`ah al-Makhzumi and Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mikhnaf al-Azdi stood up with six thousand combatants to stop their advance and turned them out of Iraq's boundaries. In this way successive encounters completely trampled their military power and turning them out of cities compelled them to roam about in the deserts. Afterwards also, when they rose in the form of groups they were crushed. (*Tarikh*, Vol. 2, pp. 580-591; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, pp. 196-206).

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "In the words wala baqiyah minkum abirun used by Amir al-Mu'minin (ع), the abir has been related with ba and ra, and it has been taken from the Arab saying Rajulun abirun which means the man who prunes the date-palm trees improves them. In one version, the word is athir and its meaning is "relater of news.' In my view, this is more appropriate, as though Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) intends to say that there should remain none to carry news.

In another version of the same sermon, the word appears as Abiz with Aza' which means one who leaps. One who dies is also called Abiz.

Sermon 58

When Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Announced His Intention to Fight the Kharijites, He Was Told That They Had Crossed the Bridge of Nahrawan and Gone over to the Other Side. It Was Then That Amir Al-Mu'minin (ع) Said the Following:

Their falling place is on this side of the river. By Allah, not even ten of them will survive while from your side not even ten will be killed.[142]

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "In this sermon, nutfa implies the River Euphrates and for water this is thenicest expression even though water may be much."

Sermon 59

When Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) Was Told That the Kharijites Had Been Totally Killed, He Said the Following:

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[142]This prediction cannot be attributed to wit and far- sightedness. Far-sighted eyes may forecast victory or defeat and preconceive the outcome of war but to tell about the actual figures of the killed on either side is beyond their capacity. This can be done only by one who can unveil the unknown future and see the coming scene with his eyes and who sees the sketches yet to appear on the, p. of the future with the help of the light of knowledge possessed by him as Imam. Consequently, events occurred according to what this inheritor of Prophet's knowledge had said and from among the Kharijites all except nine persons were killed. Two of them fled to Oman, two to Sajistan, two to Kirman and two to Jazira while one escaped to Tall Mawzan (Mawzan Hill). Of Amir al-Mu'minin's party only eight men fell as martyrs.

By Allah! No, not yet! They still exist in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief would appear from among them he would be cut down till the last of them would turn thieves and robbers.

This prediction of Amir al-Mu'minin (ع) also proved true word for word. Every chief of the Kharijites who rose was put to the sword. A few of their chiefs who were put to death are mentioned here:

1) Nafi' ibn Azraq al-Hanafi: The largest group of the Kharijites namely al-Azariqah is named after him. He was killed by Salamah al-Bahili during encounter with the army of Muslim ibn Ubays.

2) Najdah ibn Amir: The an-Najadat al-`Adhirriyyah sect of Kharijites is named after him. Abu Fudayk, the Kharijite, killed him.

3) Abdullah ibn Ibad at-Tamimi: The sect Ibadite (Ibadiyyah) is named after him. He was killed during an encounter with `Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn `Atiyyah.

4) Abu Bayhas Haysam ibn Jabir ad-Duba'i: The sect of al-Bayhasiyyah is named after him. Othman ibn Hayyan al-Murri, governor of Medina, severed his hands and feet then killed him.

5) Urwah ibn Udayyah at-Tamimi: Ziyad ibn Abih killed him during the reign of Mu`awiyah.

6) Qatari ibn al-Fuja'h al-Mazini at-Tamimi: When he encountered the army of Sufyan ibn al-Abrad al-Kalbi in Tabarastan, then Sawrah, Ibn al-Hurr ad-Darimi killed him.

7) Abu Milal Mirdas ibn Udayyah at-Tamimi: He was killed in an encounter with Abbas ibn Akhdar al-Mazini.

8) Shawdhab al-Khariji al-Yashkuri: He was killed during an encounter with Sa'id ibn `Amr al-Harashi.

9) Hawtharah ibn Wada' al-Asadi: He was killed at the hands of a man of Banu Tayy.

10) Al-Mustawrid ibn Ullafah at-Taymi: He was killed by Ma`qil ibn Qays ar-Riyahi in the reign of Mu`awiyah.

11) Shabib ibn Yazid ash-Shaybani: He died by being drowned in the river.

12) AImran ibn al-Harith ar-Rasibi: He was killed in the battle of Dulab.

13, 14) Zahhaf at-Ta'i and Qurayb ibn Murrah al-Azdi: They were killed in an encounter with Banu Taliyah.

15) az-Zubayr ibn Ali as-Saliti at-Tamimi: He was killed in an encounter with Attab ibn Warqa' ar-Riyahi.

16) Ali ibn Bashir ibn al-Mahuz al-Yarbu'i: "Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi killed him.

17) Ubaydullah ibn Bashir: He was killed in an encounter with al-Muhallab ibn Abu Sufrah in the battle of Dulab.

18) Abul-Wazi' ar-Rasibi: "man in the graveyard of Banu Yashkur pushed a wall on him and killed him.

19) Abd Rabbih as-Saghir: He was killed in an encounter with al-Muhallab ibn Abu Sufrah.

20) al-Walid ibn Tarif ash-Shaybani: He was killed in an encounter with Yazid ibn Mazyad ash-Shabani.

(21-24) Abdullah ibn Yahya al-Kindi, al-Mukhtar ibn Awf al-Azdi (Abu Hamzah ash-Shari), Abrahah ibn as-Sabah and Balj ibn Uqbah al-Asadi: They were killed by'Abdul-Malik ibn `Atiyyah as-Sa`di in the reign of Marwan ibn Muhammad (the last of Umayyads caliph).

Sermon 60

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Also Said the Following:

Do not fight[143] the Kharijites after me because one who seeks right but does not find it is not like one who seeks wrong and does find it.

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[143]The reason for stopping people from fighting the Kharijites was that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was clearly perceiving that after him authority and power would devolve on people who would be ignorant of the proper occasion of jihad, making use of the sword only to maintain their sway. And there were those

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) means Mu`awiyah and his men.”

Sermon 61

Then Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Warned of Being Killed by Deceit, He Said the Following:

Surely, there is a strong shield of Allah over me. When my day would come it would get away from me and hand me to death. At that time neither an arrow would go amiss nor a wound would heal.

Sermon 62

About the Transience of the World

Beware! Surely this world is a place from which protection cannot be sought except while one is in it. The action which is performed only for this world cannot secure salvation. People are tested in it through

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who excelled, even the Kharijites, in holding and calling Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrong. So those who are themselves in the wrong have no right to fight others in the wrong. Again, those who are willfully in the wrong can be allowed to fight those who are in the wrong by mistake. Thus, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s words make this fact clear that the misguidance of Kharijites was not willful but under Satan’s influence. They mistook wrong as right and stuck to it. On the other hand, the status of misguidance of Mu`awiyah and his party was that they rejected right realizing it as right and appropriated wrong as the code of their conduct knowing that it was wrong. Their audacity in the matter of religion reached the stage that it can neither be regarded as a result of misunderstanding nor can it be covered under the garb of error of judgement. They openly transgressed the limits of religion and paid no heed to the Prophet’s injunctions in comparison with their own view. Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written (Vol. 5, p.130) that when the Prophet’s companion Abud-Darda’ saw utensils of gold and silver being used by Mu`awiyah he said he had heard the Prophet (ص) saying, “One who drinks in vessels of gold and silver will feel flames of the fire of Hell in his stomach, whereupon Mu`awiyah said, As for me, I do not find any harm in it. Similarly, creating Ziyad ibn Abih’s blood relationship with himself by his own opinion in total disregard of the Prophet’s injunction, abusing the descendants of the Prophet (ص) over the pulpit, transgressing the limits of shari’ah, shedding blood of innocent persons and placing over Muslims (as so-called caliph) a vicious individual and thus opening the way to disbelief and atheism are events that to attribute them to any misunderstanding is like willfully closing one’s eyes to historic fact and common sense.

calamities. Those who have taken worldly pleasures here will be taken out from them (by death) and will be questioned about them. And whatever (good actions) they have achieved for the other world, they will get them there and stay in them. For the intelligent, this world is like the shade; one moment it is spread out and extended but soon it shrinks and contracts.

Sermon 63

About Decline and Destruction of the World

O servants of Allah! Fear Allah and anticipate your death by good actions. Purchase everlasting joy by paying transitory things - pleasures of this world. Get ready for the journey, for you are being driven and prepare yourselves for death, since it is hovering over you. Be a people who wake up when called and who know that this world is not their abode and so have changed it (with the next).

Certainly, Allah has not created you aimlessly nor left you useless. There is nothing between anyone of you and Paradise or Hell except death that must befall him. The life that is being shortened every moment and being dismantled every hour must be regarded very short. The hidden thing, namely death, which is being driven (to you) by two phenomena which are day and night is certainly quick to approach. The traveler which is approaching with success or failure (namely death) deserves the best of provision. So acquire such provision from this world while you are here with which you may shield yourself tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

So everyone should fear Allah, admonish himself, send forward his repentance and overpower his desire because his death is hidden from him, his desires deceive him and Satan is posted on him. He beautifies sin for him so that he may commit it and prompts him to delay repentance till his desires make him the most negligent. Piety is for thenegligent person whose life itself would be a proof against him and his own days (passed in sin) would lead him to punishment.

We ask Allah, the Glorified One, that He may make us and you like one whom bounty does not mislead, whom nothing can stop from obedience of Allah and whom shame and grief do not befall after death.

Sermon 64

About Allah's Attributes

Praise be to Allah for Whom one condition does not proceed another so that He may be the First before being the Last or He may be Manifest before being Hidden. Everyone called one (alone) save Him is by virtue of being small (in number), and everyone enjoying honor other than Him is humble. Every powerful person other than Him is weak. Every master (owner) other than Him is slave (owned).

Every knower other than Him is a seeker of knowledge. Every controller other than Him is sometimes imbued with control and sometimes with disability. Every listener other than Him is deaf to light voices while loud voices make him deaf and distant voices also leave him. Every on-looker other than Him is blind to hidden colors and delicate bodies. Every manifest thing other than Him is hidden, but every hidden thing other than Him is incapable of becoming manifest.

He did not create what He created to fortify His authority nor for fear of the consequences of time, nor to seek help against the attack of an equal or a boastful partner or a hateful opponent. On the other hand all the creatures are reared by him and are His humbled slaves. He is not conditioned in anything so that it be said that He exists the rein, nor is He separated from anything so as to be said that He is away from it. The creation of what He initiated or the administration of what He controls did not fatigue Him. No disability overtook Him against what He created. No misgiving ever occurred to Him in what He ordained and resolved it. But His verdict is certain, His knowledge is definite, His governance is overwhelming. He is wished for at times of distress and He is feared even in bounty.

Sermon 65

In Some of the Fighting Days of the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following to His Followers about the Methods of Fighting:

O crowd of Muslims! Make fear of Allah the routine of your life. Cover yourselves with peace of mind and clinch your teeth because this makes the sword slip off from the skull. Complete your armor and shake your swords in their sheathe s before showing them out. Have your eyes

on the enemy. Use your spears on both sides and strike (the enemy) with swords. Keep in mind that you are before Allah and in the company of the Prophet's cousin. Repeat your attacks and feel ashamed of running away because it is a shame for posterity and (the cause of awarding you) fire on the Day of Judgement. Give your lives (to Allah) willingly and walk towards death with ease. Beware of this great majority and the pitched tent and aim at its entirety as Satan is hiding in its corner. He has extended his hand for assault and has kept back his foot for running away. Keep on enduring till the light of Truth dawns upon you.

While you have the upper hand and Allah is with you and never will He depreciate your deeds. (Holy Quran, 47: 35)

Sermon 66

When after the Death of the Prophet (ص) News Reached Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about the Happening in Saqifa of Banu Sa'i-dah, He Inquired What the Ansar Said. People Said That They Were Asking for One Chief from among Them and One from the Others, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following:

Why did you not argue against them (Ansar) that the Prophet (ص) had left his will that whoever is good among the Ansar should be treated well and whoever is bad should be forgiven.

People said the following: "What is there against them in it?"

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "If the Government was for them there should have been no will in their favor."

Then he said the following: "What did the tribesmen of Quraish plead?" People answered: "They argued that they belong to the lineal tree of the Prophet (ص)."

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "They argued with the tree but spoiled the fruits."

From what happened at the saqifa of Banu Sa'idah, it appears that the greatest argument of the Muhajirun against the Ansar and the basis of the former's success was this very point that since they were the kith and

kin of the Prophet (ص) no one else could deserve the Caliphate. On this very ground the big crowd of Ansar became ready to lay down their weapons before three Muhajirun and the latter succeeded in winning the Caliphate by presenting their distinction of descent. Thus in connection with the events of saqifa al-Tabari writes that when the Ansar assembled in the saqifa (shed) of Banu Sa`idah to swear allegiance on the hand of Sa`d ibn Abadah, somehow Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah also got the hint and reached the re. Umar had thought out something for this occasion and he rose to speak but Abu Bakr stopped him and he himself stood up. After praising Allah and the migration of the Muhajirun and their precedence in Islam, he said the following: "They are those who worshipped Allah first of all and accepted belief in Allah and his Prophet's friends and his kith and kin. Therefore, these alone deserve the Caliphate themost. Whoever clashes with them commits excess."

When Abu Bakr finished his speech, al-Hubab ibn Mundhir stood up and, turning to the Ansar said the following: "O group of Ansar! Do not give your reins in the hand of others. The populace is under your care. You are men of honor, wealth, tribe and gathering. If the Muhajirun have precedence over you in some matters, you too have precedence over them in other matters. You gave them refuge in your houses. You are the fighting arm of Islam. With your help Islam stood on its own feet. In your cities the prayer of Allah was established with freedom. Save yourselves from division and dispersion and stick to your right unitedly. If the Muhajirun do not concede to your right tell them there should be one chief from us and one from them.

No sooner had al-Hubab sat down after saying this then Umar rose and spoke thus: "This cannot be! There can be no two rulers at one and the same time. By Allah! The Arabs will never agree to have you as the head of the state since the Prophet (ص) was not from among you. Certainly, the Arabs will not have the least objection in that the caliphate is allowed to one in whose house the Prophethood rests so that the ruler should also be from the same house. For those who dissent, clear arguments can be put forth. Whoever comes in conflict with us in the matter of the authority and rulership of Muhammad (ص) he is leaning towards wrong, is a sinner and is falling into destruction.

After `Umar, al-Hubab again stood up and said to the Ansar, ALook, stick to your point and do not pay heed to the views of this man or his supporters. They want to trample your rights. If they do not consent

turn him and them out of your cities and appropriate the Caliphate. Who other than you can deserve it more?

When al-Hubab finished `Umar scolded him. There was a use of bad words from that side also and the status began to worsen. On seeing this Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah spoke with the intention of cooling down the Ansar and to win them over to his side and said the following:

"O Ansar! You are the people who supported us and helped us in every manner. Do not now change your ways and do not give up your behavior." But the Ansar refused to change their mind. They were prepared to swear allegiance to Sa`d and people just wanted to approach him when a man of Sa`d's tribe Bashīr ibn `Amr al-Khazraji stood up and said the following: "No doubt we came forward for jihad and gave support to the religion, but our aim in doing thus was to please Allah and to obey His Prophet (ص). It does not behoove us to claim superiority and create trouble in the matter of the caliphate. Muhammad (ص) was from Quraish and they have a greater right for it and are more appropriate for it."

As soon as Bashir uttered these words, dissension occurred among the Ansar, and this exactly was his aim because he could not see a man of his own tribe rising so high. The Muhajirun took advantage of this division among the Ansar and Umar and Aba `Ubaydah decided to swear allegiance to Abu Bakr. They had just come forward when Bashir first of all put his hand on that of Abu Bakr and after that `Umar and Abu Ubaydah swore the allegiance. Then the people of Bashīr's tribe came and swore allegiance and trampled Sa`d ibn Abadah under their feet.

During this time Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was occupied in the funeral bath and burial of the Prophet (ص). When afterwards he heard about the assembly at the saqifa and came to know that the Muhajirun had won the score over the Ansar by pleading themselves to be from the tribe of the Prophet (ص), he uttered the fine sentence that those who argued on the lineal tree spoiled its fruits. That is, if the Muhajirun's claim was acceded for being from the lineal tree of the Prophet (ص), how can those who are the fruits of this tree be ignored? It is strange that Abu Bakr who connects with the Prophet (ص) in the seventh generation above and `Umar who connects with him in theninth generation above may be held of the tribe and family of the Prophet (ص) and he who was his first cousin is refused the status of a brother.

Sermon 67

When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Appointed Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr as the Ruler of Egypt, and the Latter Was Overpowered and Killed, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following:

He had intended to send Hashim ibn Utbah to Egypt and had I done so he would have neither made a way for the opponents nor given them time (to get hold of him). This is without reproach to Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr as I loved him and had raised him.

Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr's mother was Asma' daughter of Umays whom Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) married after Abu Bakr's death. Consequently, Muhammad (ص) lived and was brought up under the care of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and he imbibed his ways and manners. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) loved him and regarded him as his son, saying, "Muhammad (ص) is my son from Abu Bakr. He was born in the journey during the last Hajj (of the Prophet (ص)) and died as a martyr in 38 A.H. at the age of twenty eight years.

On accession to the Caliphate, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had selected Qays ibn Sa`d ibn Abadah as the Governor of Egypt but circumstances developed so that he had to be removed. Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was then sent there as Governor. The policy of Qays there was that he did not want to take any serious step against the Othman group but Muhammad's view was different. After the lapse of a month he sent them word that in case they did not obey him their existence there would be impossible. Upon this these people organized a front against him and engaged themselves in secret wire pulling, but became conspicuous soon. After arbitration they started creating trouble with the slogan of vengeance. This polluted the atmosphere of Egypt. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) came to know these deteriorated conditions he gave the governorship of Egypt to Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar and sent him off there in order that he might suppress insurgent elements and save the administration from getting worse. Yet, he could not escape the evil designs of the Umayyads and was killed by poison while on his way. Thus, the governorship of Egypt remained with Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr.

On this side, the performance of Amr ibn al-As in connection with the arbitration made Mu`awiyah recall his own promise. Consequently, he gave him six thousand combatants and set him off to attack Egypt. When Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr knew of the advancing force of the enemy he wrote to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) for help. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied that he would be soon collecting help for him but in the meantime he should mobilize his own forces. Muhammad mobilized four thousand men under his banner and divided them into two formations. He kept one part with himself and on the other he placed Kinanah ibn Bishr at-Tujibi in command and ordered him to go forward to check the enemy's advance. When they settled down to camp before the enemy, various parties of the enemy began attacking them. Yet, they faced them with courage and valour. At last, Mu`awiyah ibn Hudayj as-Sikuni al-Kindi made an assault with full force. These people did not turn away from the enemy's swords but faced them steadfastly and fell as martyrs in action. The effect of this defeat was that Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr's men got frightened and deserted him. Finding himself alone, Muhammad fled and sought refuge in a deserted place. The enemy however got news about him through someone and traced him out when he was dying with thirst. Muhammad asked for water but these cruel men refused and butchered him thirsty. Then they put his body in the belly of a dead ass and burnt it.

Malik ibn Ka`b al-Arhabi had already left Kufa with two thousand men, but before he could reach Egypt it had been occupied by the enemy.

Sermon 68

Admonishing His Companions Not to Be Careless in Their Behavior, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following:

How long shall I accord you consideration that is accorded to camels with hollow humps, or to worn clothe s which when stitched on one side give way on the other. Whenever a vanguard force of Syria hovers over you, everyone of you shuts his door and hides himself like the lizard in its hole or a badger in its den. By Allah, he whom people like you support must suffer disgrace and he who throws arrows with your support is as if he throws arrows that are broken both at head and tail. By Allah, within the courtyard you are quite numerous but under the banner you are only a few. Certainly, I know what can improve you and how your crookedness can be straightened. But I shall not improve your

condition by marring myself. Allah may disgrace your faces and destroy you. You do not understand the right as you understand the wrong and do not crush the wrong as you crush the right.

Sermon 69

Delivered in the Morning of the Day When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Fatally Struck with a Sword's Blow:

I was sitting when sleep overtook me. I saw the Prophet of Allah (ص) appear before me and I said, "O Prophet of Allah (ص)! what crookedness and animosity I had to face from the people." The Prophet of Allah (ص) said the following: "Invoke (Allah) evil upon them, but I said, "Allah may change them for me with better ones and change me for them with a worse one."

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Al-awad means crookedness and al-ladad means animosity; this is a most eloquent expression."

Sermon 70

Condemning the Then People of Iraq:

Ow, then, O folks![144]

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[144]When after arbitration the Iraqis displayed lethargy and heartlessness in retaliating against the continuous attacks of Mu`awiyah, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon scorning and admonishing them. Herein he has referred to their being deceived at Siffīn and has likened them to a woman who has five qualities:

i) Firstly, she is pregnant. This implies that these people had full capability to fight and were not like a barren woman from whom nothing is expected.

ii) Secondly, she has completed the period of pregnancy. That is they had passed over all difficult stages and has approached near the final goal of Victory.

iii) Thirdly, she willfully miscarries her child. That is after coming close to victory they came down to settlement and instead of achieving the coveted goal faced disappointment.

Iv) Fourthly, her period of widowhood is long. That is they fell in such a state as though they had no protector or patron and they were roaming about without any ruler.

v) Fifthly, her successors would be distant persons. That is the people of Syria who had no relationship with them would occupy their properties.

You are like the pregnant woman who, on completion of the period of pregnancy delivers a dead child and her husband is also dead and her period of widowhood is long while only remote relationship inherits her. By Allah, I did not come to you of my own accord. I came to you by force of circumstances. I have come to know that you say Ali speaks lies. May Allah fight you! Against whom do I speak lies? Against Allah? But I am the first to have believed in Him. Against His Prophet (ص) ? But I am the first who testified to him. Certainly not. By Allah it was a way of expression which failed to appreciate and you were not capable of it. Woe unto you. I am giving out these measures of nice expression free of any cost. I wish there were vessels good enough to hold them.

Certainly, you will understand it after some time. (Holy Quran, 38: 88)

Sermon 71

Here, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Tells People How to Pronounce the Asalawat (To Invoke Divine Blessings on the Prophet [ص]):

O Lord! Spreader of the surfaces (of earth) and Keeper (intact) of all skies, Creator of hearts on good and evil nature, (I invoke You to) send Your choicest blessings and growing favors on Muhammad (ص), Your servant and last Prophet (ص), opener for what is closed, proclaimer of truth with truth, repulser of the forces of wrong and crusher of the onslaughts of misguidance. As he was burdened (with responsibility of Prophethood) so he bore it standing by Your commands, advancing towards Your will, without shrinking of steps of weakness of determination, listening to Your revelation, preserving Your testament, proceeding forward in the spreading of Your commands till he lit fire for its seeker and lit the path for the groper in the dark.

Hearts achieved guidance through him after being ridden with troubles. He introduced clear guiding signs and shining injunctions. He is Your trusted trustee, the treasurer of Your treasured knowledge, Your witness on the Day of Judgement, Your envoy of truth and Your Messenger towards the people. My Allah prepare a large place for him under Your shade and award him multiplying good by Your bounty.

My God, give height to his construction above all other constructions, heighten his status with You, grant perfection to his glory and perfect for him his light. In reward for his discharging Your Prophethood, grant him that his testimony be admitted and his speech be loved for his speech is just and his judgements are clear-cut. My Allah put us and him together in the pleasure of life, continuance of bounty, satisfaction of desires, enjoyment of pleasures, ease of living, peace of mind and gifts of honor.

Sermon 72

When Marwan ibn al-Hakam was taken captive during the Battle of the Camel (Jamal) in Basra, he asked Hassan and Hussain (peace be upon them) to intercede on his behalf before Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). So they spoke to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) about him and he released him. Then they said, "O Imam Ali! Marwan desires to swear his allegiance to you, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

Did he not swear me allegiance after the killing of Othman? Now I do not need his allegiance because his is the hand of a Jew. If he swears me allegiance with his hand he would violate it after a short while. Well, he is to get power for so long as a dog licks his nose. He is the father of four rams (who will also rule). The people will face hard days through him and his sons.

Marwan ibn al-Hakam was the nephew and son-in-law of Othman. Due to a thin body and tall stature he was known with the nickname "Khayt Batil" (thread of falsehood). When `Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan killed `Amr ibn Sa'id al-Ashdaq, his brother Yahya ibn Sa'id said the following: "O sons of Khayt al-Batil (the thread of wrongdoing)! You have played deceit on `Amr and people like you build their houses (of authority) on deceit and treachery."

Although his father, al-Hakam ibn Abul-As, had accepted Islam at the time of the fall of Mecca, his behavior and activities caused a great deal of pain to the Prophet (ص). Consequently, the Prophet (ص) cursed him and his descendants and said, "Woe will befall my people from the progeny of this man." At last in view of his increasing intrigues, the Prophet (ص) exiled him from Medina towards the valley of Hajj (in Ta'if) and Marwan also went with him. Thereafter, the Prophet (ص) did not

allow them to enter Medina as long as he was alive. Abu Bakr and Umar did likewise, but Othman sent for both of them during his reign and raised Marwan to such a height as though the reins of caliphate rested in his hands. Thereafter his circumstances became so favorable that on the death of Mu`awiyah ibn Yazid he became the Caliph of the Muslims. He had only ruled nine months and eighteen days before death overtook him in such a way that his wife sat with the pillow on his face and did not leave until he breathe d his last.

The four sons to whom Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has referred were the four sons of Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan namely al-Walid, Sulayman, Yazid and Hisham, who ascended the Caliphate one after the other and colored the, pp. of history with their stories. Some commentators have regarded this reference to Marwan's own sons whose names are Abdul-Malik, Abdul-Aziz, Bishr and Muhammad (ص). Out of these Abdul-Malik did become Caliph of Islam but Abdul-Azaz became governor of Egypt, Bishr of Iraq and Muhammad of Jazira.

Sermon 73

When the Consultative Committee (Or Shura) Decided to Swear the Oath of Allegiance to `Othman, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following:

You have certainly known that I am the most rightful of all others for the Caliphate. By Allah! So long as the affairs of the Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression in it save on myself I shall be keeping aloof from its attractions and allurements for which you aspire.

Sermon 74

When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Learned That the Umayyads Blamed Him for Killing Othman, He Said the Following:

The Umayyads' knowledge of my personality did not desist them for accusing me, nor did my precedence (in accepting Islam) keep these ignorant people from blaming me. Allah's admonitions are more eloquent than my tongue. I contest against those who break away from Faith and oppose those who entertain doubts. Uncertainties should be placed before Holy Quran, the Book of Allah (for clarification). Certainly, people will be recompensed according to what they have in their hearts.

Sermon 75

About Preaching and Counseling

May Allah bless one who listens to a point of wisdom and retains it. When he is invited to the right path he approaches it. He follows a leader (by catching his waistband) and finds salvation, keeps Allah before his eyes and fears his sins. He performs actions sincerely and acts virtuously, earns treasure of heavenly rewards, avoids vice, aims at (good) objective and reaps recompense. He faces his desires and rejects (fake) hopes, makes endurance the means to his salvation and piety the provision for his death. He rides on the path of honor and sticks to the highway of truth. He makes good use of his time and hastens towards the end and takes with him the provision of (good) actions.

Sermon 76

About the Umayyads

Banu Umayyah (the Umayyads) are allowing me the inheritance of Muhammad (ص) bit by bit. By Allah, if I live I would throw them away as the butcher removes the dust from the dust-covered piece of flesh.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: In one version for "al-widhamu' taribah" (dust covered piece of flesh) the words Aat-turabulwadhimah (the soil sticking on a piece of flesh) have been shown. That is, for the adjective the qualified noun and for the qualified noun the adjective has been placed. As for the word "layufawwiqunani", Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) implies that they allow him bit by bit just as a she-camel may be milked a little then its young one may be made to suck milk so that it may be ready to be milked. And "al-widham" is the plural of "wadhamah" which means the piece of stomach or of liver which falls on the ground then the dust is removed from it.

Sermon 77

Supplications by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع):

O Lord! Forgive what You know about me more than I do. If I return (to the sins) You return to forgiveness. My Allah forgive me for

what I had promised to myself but You did not find its fulfillment with me. My Allah forgive me with what I sought nearness to You with my tongue but my heart opposed and did not perform it. My Allah forgive my winking of the eye, vile utterances, desires of the heart and errors of speech.

Sermon 78

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) decided to set out for the battle with the Kharijites[1] someone said, "If you set out at this moment then according to astrology I fear you will not be successful in your aim," whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

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[145]When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) decided to march towards Nahrawan to suppress the risings of the Kharijites, Afīf ibn Qays al-Kindi said to him, "This hour is not good. If you set out at this time, then instead of victory and success you will face defeat and be vanquished." But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) paid no heed to his view and ordered the army to march that very moment. As a result, the Kharijites suffered such a clear defeat that out of their nine thousand combatants only nine individuals saved their lives by running away while the rest were killed.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has argued about astrology being wrong or incorrect in three ways. Firstly, if the view of an astrologer is accepted as correct it would mean falsification of the Holy Quran. An astrologer claims to ascertain hidden things of failure by seeing the stars while the Holy Quran says the following:

Say: "None (either) in the heavens or in the earth knows the unseen save Allah" (27: 65).

Secondly, under his misconception, the astrologer believes that he can know his benefit or harm through knowing the future. In that case it would be useless to turn to Allah and seek His help; while this indifference towards Allah and self-reliance is a sort of heresy and atheism, which puts an end to his hope in Allah. Thirdly, if he succeeds in any objective, he would regard this success to be the result of his knowledge of astrology, the results from which he would praise himself rather than Allah and will expect that whomever he guides (in this manner) would necessarily be grateful to him rather than to Allah. These points do not apply to astrology to the extent it may be believed that the astrological findings are in the nature of effect of medicines which are subject to alteration at will of Allah. The competence achieved by most of our religious scholars in astrology is correct in this very ground that they did not regard its findings as final.

Do you think you can tell the hour when a man goes out and no evil will befall him or can warn of the time at which if one goes out harm will accrue? Whoever testifies to this, falsifies the Holy Quran and becomes unmindful of Allah in achieving his desired objective and in warding off the undesirable. You cherish saying this so that he who acts on what you say should praise you rather than Allah because according to your misconception you have guided him about the hour in which he would secure benefit and avoid harm.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) then advanced towards the people and said the following:

O People! Beware of learning the science of stars except that with which guidance is sought on land or sea because it leads to divining and an astrologer is a the Diviner, while the Diviner is like the sorcerer, the sorcerer is like the unbeliever and the unbeliever would be in Hell. Proceed forward in the Name of Allah.

Sermon 79

After the Battle of Jamal, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said the Following about Physical Defects of Women:

O people! Women are deficient in faith, deficient in shares and deficient in intelligence. As regarding the deficiency in their faith, it is their abstention from prayers and fasting during their menstrual period. As regarding deficiency in their intelligence it is because the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man. As for the deficiency of their shares that is because of their share in inheritance being half of men. So beware of the evils of women. Be on your guard even from those of them who are (reportedly) good. Do not obey them even in good things so that they may not attract you to evils.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon after the devastation caused by the Battle of Jamal. Since the devastation resulting from this battle was the outcome of blindly following a woman's command, in this sermon, he has described women's physical defects and their causes and effects. Thus their first weakness is that for a few days in every month they have to abstain from prayer and fasting and this abstention from worship is a proof of their deficiency in faith. Although the real meaning of Iman (belief) is heart-felt testimony and an inner conviction, yet metaphorically, it also applies to action and character.

Since actions are the reflection of belief, they are also regarded as part of belief. Thus, it is related from Imam Ali ibn Musa ar Rida (ع) that: "Iman (belief) is a testimony at heart, an admission by the tongue and action by the limbs.

The second weakness is that their natural propensities do not admit the full performance of their intelligence. Therefore, nature has given them the power of intelligence only in accordance with the scope of their activities which can guide them in pregnancy, delivery, child nursing, child care and household affairs. On the basis of this weakness of mind and intelligence their testimony has not been accorded the status of man's testimony, as Allah says the following:

... Then call to witnesses two witness from among your men and if there not be two men then (take) a man for two women, of those you approve of the witnesses, so that should one of the two (women) forget the (second) one of the two may remind the other. (Holy Quran, 2: 282)

The third weakness is that their share in inheritance is half of man's share in inheritance as the Holy Quran says the following:

Allah enjoins you regarding your children. The male shall have equal to the shares of two females. (Holy Quran, 4: 11)

This shows woman's weakness because the reason for her share in inheritance being half is that the liability of her maintenance rests on man. When man's status is that of a maintainer and caretaker the status of the weaker gender who is in need of maintenance and care-taking is evident.

After describing their natural weakness as Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) points out the mischief of blindly following them and wrongly obeying them. He says that not to say of bad things but even if they say with regard to some good things it should not be done in a way that these should feel as if it is being done in pursuance of their wish. Rather it should be done in a way that they should realize that the good act has been performed because of its being good and that their pleasure or wish has nothing to do with it. If they have even the doubt that their pleasures has been kept in view in it they would slowly increase in their demands and would wish that they should be obeyed in all matters however evil, the inevitable consequence whereof will be destruction and ruin. Shaikh

Muhammad Abdo writes about this view of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as under:

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has said what is corroborated by the experiences of centuries.

Sermon 80

About the Methods of Preaching and Counseling

O people! Abstinence is to shorten desires, to be thankful for bounties and to keep from prohibitions. If this is possible then (at least) the prohibitions should not overpower your patience. Allah has exhausted the excuse before you through clear, shining arguments and open, bright books.

Sermon 81

About the World and its People

How shall I describe this world whose beginning is grief and whose end is destruction?[146]

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[146]The beginning of the world is grief and its end is destruction. This sentence contains the same truth which the Holy Quran has presented in the verse saying, "*Indeed We have created man (to dwell) amid hardship*" (90: 4).

It is true that right from the narrow womb of the mother and unto the vastness of the firmament the changes of human life do not come to an end. When man first tastes life he finds himself closed in such a dark prison where he can neither move the limbs nor change the sides. When he gets rid of this confinement and steps in this world he has to pass through innumerable troubles. In the beginning he can neither speak with the tongue so as to describe his difficulty or pain nor does he possess energy in the limbs so as to accomplish his needs himself. Only his suppressed sobs and flowing tears express his needs and translate his grief and sorrow. When after the laps of this period he enters the stage of learning and instruction, then on every step voices of admonition and abuse welcome him. All the time he seems frightened and terrified. When he is relieved of this period of subjugation he finds himself surrounded by the worries of family life and livelihood, where sometime, there is clash with comrades in profession, sometimes collision with enemies, sometimes confrontation with vicissitudes of time, sometimes attack of ailments and sometimes the shock of children. Then old age approaches him with the tidings of helplessness and

The lawful actions performed here have to be accounted for, while for the forbidden one there is punishment. Whoever is rich here faces mischief and whoever is poor gets grief. One who hankers after it does not get it. If one keeps away from it then it advances towards him. If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it then it would blind him.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "If a thinker thinks over this phrase of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) waman absara biha bassarat'hu (If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight), he would find the rein a very amazing meaning and far-reaching sense the purpose of which cannot be appreciated and whose aim cannot be understood particularly when he joins it with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's phrase waman absara ilayha a a`matahu (If one has his eye on it, then it would blind him), he

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weakness and eventually he bids farewell to this world with mortification and grief in the heart.

Thereafter Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says about this world, that within its lawful actions there is the question of reckoning and in its forbidden acts there are hardships of punishment, as a result of which even pleasant joys also produce bitterness in his palate. If there is plenty of wealth and money in this world then man finds himself in such a whirlpool (of worries) that he loses his joy and peace of mind. But if there is want and poverty, he is ever crying for wealth. For he who hankers after this world there is no limit to his desires. If one wish is fulfilled the desire for fulfillment of another wish crops up. This world is like the reflection. If you run after it then it will itself run forward but if you leave it and run away from it then it follows you. In the same way, if a person does not run after the world, the world runs after him. The implication is that if a person breaks the clutches of greed and avarice and keeps aloof from undesirable hankering after the world, he too gets (pleasure of) the world and he does not remain deprived of it. Therefore, he who surveys this world from above its surface and takes lesson from its changes and happenings and through its variation and alterations gains knowledge about Allah's Might, Wisdom and Sagacity, Mercy, Clemency and Sustaining power, his eyes will gain real brightness and sight. On the other hand the person who is lost only in the colorfulness of the world and its decorations, loses himself in the darkness of the world. This is why Allah has forbidden to view the world thus:

And strain not thine eyes unto that which We have provided (different) parties of them, (of) the splendor of the life of this world, so that We may try them in it; for the provision of your Lord is better and more abiding (Holy Quran, 20: 131).

would find the difference between absara biha and absara laha, clear, bright, wonderful and shining."

Sermon 82

This Sermon Is Called Al-gharra', and it Is One of the Most Wonderful Sermons of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع):

Praise be to Allah Who is High above all else and is Near (the creation) through His bounty. He is the Giver of all rewards and distinction and Dispeller of all calamities and hardships. I praise Him for His continuous mercy and His copious bounties.

I believe in Him as He is the First of all and He is Manifest. I seek guidance from Him as He is Near and is the Guide. I seek His succor as He is Mighty and the Subduer. I depend upon Him as He is the Sufficer and Supporter. And I testify that Muhammad (ص) (blessing of Allah be on him and his progeny) is His slave and His Prophet (ص). He sent him for enforcement of His commands, for exhausting His pleas and for presenting warnings (against eternal punishment).

Enjoining People to be Pious:

O servants of Allah! I admonish you to fear Allah Who has furnished illustrations and Who has timed for you your lives. He has given you the covering of outfit[147] and He has scattered for you livelihood. He has surrounded you with His knowledge. He has ordained rewards. He has bestowed upon you vast bounties and extensive gifts. He has warned you through far reaching arguments and He has counted you by numbers. He has fixed for you ages (to live) in this place of test and house of instruction.

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[147]Allah has furnished every creature with a natural outfit: The means of protecting it from cold and heat. Thus, some animals are covered in feathers while some carry apparels of wool on their bodies. But the high degree of intelligence of man and the quality of being timid and modest demands his distinction from other creatures. Consequently, to maintain this distinction, he has been taught the ways of covering his body. It was this natural impulse when Adam was made to give up his outfit he began to cover his body with leaves. The Holy Quran says the following:

Cautioning Against this World:

You are tested in this world and have to render an accounting. Certainly this world is a dirty watering place and a muddy source of drinking.

Its appearance is attractive and its inside is destructive. It is a delible deception, a vanishing reflection and a bent pillar. When its despiser begins to like it and he who is not acquainted with it feels satisfied with it, then it praises and puts down its feet (in joy). It entraps him in its trap, makes him the target of its arrows and puts round his neck the rope of death taking him to the narrow grave and fearful abode in order to show him his place of stay and the recompense of his acts. This goes on from generation to generation. Neither death stops from cutting them asunder nor do the survivors keep aloof from committing sins.

Death and Resurrection:

They are emulating each other and proceeding in groups towards the final objective and the rendezvous of death, till when matters come to a close, the world dies and resurrection draws near. Allah[148] will take

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*So when they tasted (of) the tree their shameful things got displayed unto them and they began covering themselves with leaves of the Garden.(*Holy Quran, 7: 22)

This was the punishment awarded for his committing what was better for him to omit. When removal of outfit is punishment its putting on would be a favor and since this is peculiar to man it has been particularly mentioned.

[148]The intention is that Allah would resurrect all the dead, even though they had been eaten by beasts and been merged in their bodies. Its aim is to refute the view of the philosophers who hold that the resurrection of the non-existent is impossible and who do not believe in the physical resurrection. Their argument briefly is that a thing which has lost existence by death cannot return to life. Consequently, after the destruction of this world the return of any of its beings to life is out of question. But the belief is not correct because dispersal of the parts does not mean its non-existence, so as to say that putting these parts together again would involve resurrection of the non-existent. On the other hand separated and dispersed parts continue to exist in some form or the other. Of course, in this connection this objection has some force that when every person is to be resurrected in his own form, then in case one person has eaten the other, it would be impossible to resurrect either of them with his own constituent parts. This would involve creating a deficiency of parts in he who had eaten the other.

them out from the corners of the graves, the birds' nests, the beasts' dens and the centers of death. They will hasten towards His command and run towards the place fixed for their final return group by group, quiet, standing and arrayed in rows. They will be within Allah's sight and He will hear everyone whom He calls.

They will be wearing the outfit of helplessness and the covering of submission and indignity. (At this time) contrivances will disappear, desires will be cut, hearts will quietly sink, voices will be curbed, sweat will choke the throat, fear will increase and ears will resound with the thundering voice of the announcer calling them towards final judgement, awarding recompense, striking with punishment and paying rewards.

The Limitation of Life:

People have been created as a proof of (His) power. They have been brought up with authority, they are made to die through pangs and placed in graves where they turn into crumbs. Then they will be resurrected one by one, awarded their recompense and will have to account for their actions, each one separately. They had been allowed time to seek deliverance, had been shown the right path and had been allowed to live and seek favors. The darkness of doubts had been removed. They had been let free in this period of life as a training place in order to make preparation for the race on the Day of Judgement, to search for the objective with thoughtfulness, to get time necessary to secure benefits and provide for the next place of stay.

No Happiness without Piety:

How appropriate are these illustrations and effective admonitions provided they are received by pure hearts, open ears, firm views and sharp wits. Fear Allah like him who listened (from good advice) and bowed before it, when he committed sin he admitted it, when he felt fear he acted virtuously. When he apprehended he hastened (towards good deeds), when he believed he performed virtuous acts, when he was asked to take lesson (from the happenings of this world) he learned. When he was

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Metaphysicians have replied that in everybody there are some constituents which are essential and others which are non-essential. The essential constituents remain constant from the beginning till end of life and suffer no change or alteration and resurrection with regard to such constituents would not create any deficiency in the man who ate the other.

asked to desist he abstained (from evil), when he responded to the call (of Allah) he leaned (towards him), when he turned back (to evil) he repented, when he followed he almost imitated and when he was shown (the right path) he saw it.

Such a man was busy in search of truth and got rid (of the worldly evils) by running away. He collected provision (of good deeds) for himself, purified his inner self, built for the next world and took provision for the day of his departure, keeping in view his journey, his requirement and the status of his need. He sent ahead for the abode of his stay (in the next world). O servants of Allah!, fear Allah keeping in view the reason why He created you and be afraid of Him to the extent He has advised you to do. Make yourself deserve what He has promised you, by having confidence in the truth of His promise and entertaining fear for the Day of Judgement.

Part of the Same Sermon: Reminding People of Allah's Bounties

He has made for you ears to preserve what is important, eyes to have sight in place of blindness and limbs which consist of many (smaller) parts, whose curves are in proportion with the molding of their shapes and lengths of their ages. He has also given you bodies that sustain themselves and hearts that are busy in search of their food, besides other big bounties, obliging the bestowing (of His blessings) and a fortress of safety. He has fixed for you ages that are not known to you. He has retained for you remains of the past people for your instruction. Those people enjoyed themselves fully and were completely unhampered. Death overtook them before (satisfaction of) their desires, from which the hands of death separated them. They did not provide for themselves during the health of their bodies nor take lessons during the stages of youth.

Are these people who are in youth waiting for the back-bending of old age, those enjoying fresh health waiting for ailments and these living persons looking for the hour of death? When the hour of departure comes closer, the journey is at hand with pangs of grief and trouble. When the suffering of sorrows, suffocation of saliva and the time would arrive for calling relations and friends for help and changing sides on the bed, could then thenear ones stop death, or themourning women do any good? He would rather be left alone in the graveyard confined to thenarrow corner of his grave.

His skin has been pierced all over by reptiles and his freshness has been destroyed by these tribulations. Storms have removed his traces and calamities have obliterated even his signs. Fresh bodies have turned thin and withe red and bones have become rotten. The spirits are burdened with the weight of sins and have become conscious of the unknown things. But now neither the good deeds can be added to nor evil acts can be atoned for by repentance. Are you not sons, fathers, brothers and relations of these dead and will you not follow their footsteps and pass by their paths? But hearts are still unmoved, heedless of guidance and moving on wrong lines, as though the addressee is someone else and the correct way is to amass worldly gains.

Prepare Yourself for the Day of Judgement:

And be informed that you have to pass over the pathway (of Sirat) where steps waver, feet slip, and there are fearful dangers at every step. O servants of Allah! Fear Allah like the fearing of a wise man whom the thought (of next world) has turned away from other matters. The fear (of Allah) has afflicted his body with trouble and pain, his engagement in the night prayer has turned even his short sleep into awakening, hope (of eternal recompense) keeps him thirsty in the day, abstention has curbed his desires and remembrance of Allah is ever moving his tongue. He entertains fear before dangers. He avoids uneven ways in favor of clear ones. He follows the shortest route to secure his purpose, wishfulness does not twist his thinking and ambiguities do not blind his eyes. He enjoys deep sleep and passes his day happily because of the happiness of good tidings and pleasure of (eternal bounties).

He passes the pathway of this world in a praiseworthy manner. He reaches the Hereafter with virtues. He hastens (towards virtue) out of fear (for vice). He moves briskly during the short time (of life in this world). He devotes himself in seeking (eternal good), he runs away from evil. During today he is mindful of tomorrow and keeps the future in his view. Certainly Paradise is the best reward and achievement, which hell is appropriate punishment and suffering. Allah is the best Avenger and Helper and the Holy Quran is the best argument and the best to confront (them).

Warning Against Satan:

I enjoin upon you fear of Allah Who has left no excuse against what He has warned, has exhausted argument (of guidance) about the (right) path He has shown. He has warned you of the enemy that steals

into hearts and stealthily speaks into ears and thereby misguides and brings about destruction, makes (false) promises and keeps under wrong impression. He represents evil sins in attractive shape and shows as light even serious crimes. When he has deceived his comrades and exhausted the pledge he begins to find fault with what he presented as good and considers serious what he had shown as light and threatens from what he had shown as safe.

Part of the Same Sermon Dealing with Creation of Man

Or look at man whom Allah has created in the dark wombs and layers of curtains an from what was overflowing semen, then a shapeless clot, then embryo, then a suckling infant, then a child then a fully grown young man. Then He gave him heart with a memory, a tongue to talk and eyes to see with in order that he may take lesson (from whatever is around him), understand, follow the admonition and abstain from evil.

When he attained the normal growth and his structure gained its average development, he fell in self-conceit and became perplexed. He drew buckets of desires, became immersed in fulfilling his wishes for pleasures of the world and his (sordid) aims. He did not fear any evil nor became frightened of any apprehension. He died infatuated with his vices. He spent his short life in rubbish pursuits. He earned no reward nor did he fulfil any obligation. Fatal illness overtook him while he was still in his enjoyments and perplexed him. He passed the night in the wakefulness of the hardships of grief and the pricking of pains and ailments. He suffered in the presence of real brother, loving father, wailing mother and crying sister, while he himself was under a maddening uneasiness, serious senselessness, fearful cries, suffocating pains, anguish of suffocating sufferings and the pangs of death.

Thereafter, he was clad in the shroud while he remained quiet and thoroughly submissive to others. Then he was placed on planks in such a state that he had been down-trodden by hardships and thinned by ailments. The crowd of young men and helping brothers carried him to his house of loneliness where all connections of visitors are severed. Thereafter those who accompanied him went away and those who were wailing for him returned. He was made to sit in his grave for a terrifying questioning and a slippery examination. The great calamity of that place is the hot water and entry into Hell, flames of eternal Fire and intensity of blazes. There is no resting period, no gap for ease, no power to intervene, no death to bring about solace and no sleep to make him forget pain. He

rather lies under several kinds of deaths and moment-to-moment punishment. We seek refuge with Allah.

The Lesson to Be Learned from Those Who Have Passed Away:

O servants of Allah! where are those who were allowed (long) ages to live and they enjoyed bounty? they were taught and they learned. They were given time and they passed it in vain. They were kept healthy and they forgot (their duty). They were allowed a long period (of life), were handsomely provided, were warned of grievous punishment and were promised big rewards. You should avoid sins that lead to destruction and vices that attract the wrath (of Allah).

O people who possess eyes and ears, health and wealth! Is there any place of protection, any shelter of safety, or asylum or haven, or occasion to run away or to come back (to this world) ? If not, Ahow are you then turned away (Holy Quran, 6: 95; 10: 34; 35: 3; 40: 62) and whither are you averting? By what things have you been deceived? Certainly, the share of everyone of you from this earth is just a piece of land equal to his owns stature and size where he would lie on his cheeks covered with dust. The present is an opportune moment for acting.

O servants of Allah! Since the neck is free from the loop and spirit is also unfettered, now you have time for seeking guidance. You are in ease of body; you can assemble in crowds, the rest of life is before you; you have opportunity of acting by will; there is opportunity for repentance and peaceful circumstances. (But you should act) before you are overtaken by narrow circumstances and distress, or fear and weakness, before the approach of the awaited death and before seizure by the Almighty, the Powerful.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “It is related that when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon people began to tremble, tears flowed from their eyes and their hearts were frightened. Some people call this sermon the Brilliant Sermon (al-Khutbatul-Gharra’).”

Sermon 83

About Amr ibn al-As

I am surprised at the son of an-Nabighah that he says among the people of Syria that I am a jester and that I am engaged in frolic and fun. He said wrong and spoke sinfully. Beware, the worst speech is what is untrue. He speaks and lies. He promises and breaks the promise. He begs and sticks, but when someone begs from him he withholds miserly. He betrays the pledge and ignores kinship.

When in a battle, he commands and admonishes but only until the swords do not come into action. When such a moment arrives his great trick is to turn naked[149]
before his adversary. By Allah, surely the remembrance of death has kept me away from fun and play while obliviousness about the Hereafter has prevented him from speaking truth. He has not sworn allegiance to Mu`awiyah without purpose; but has beforehand got him to agree that he would have to pay its price and gave him an award for forsaking religion.

Sermon 84

About the Perfection of Allah and Counseling

I testify that there is no god but Allah, He is One and there is no partner with Him. He is the First, such that nothing was before Him. He is the Last, such that there is no limit for Him. Imagination cannot catch any

[149]Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) here refers to the incident when the Conqueror of Egypt, Amr ibn al-As, exhibited the "feat of his courage" by displaying his private parts! What happened was that when in the battlefield of Siffin he and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had an encounter, he rendered himself naked in order to ward off the blow of the sword. At this Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) turned his face away and spared him his life. The famous Arab poet al-Farazdaq said about it: "There is no good in warding off trouble by ignominy as was done one day by Amr ibn al-As by exposing his private parts." Even in this ignoble act `Amr ibn al-As had not the credit of doing it himself, but had rather followed another who had preceded him because the man who first adopted this device was Talhah ibn Abu Talhah who had saved his life in the battle of Uhud by becoming naked before Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and so he showed this way to the others. Thus, besides Amr ibn al-As trick was played by Bisr ibn Abu Arta'ah also to save himself from the sword of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). When after the performance of this notable deed Bisr went to Mu`awiyah the latter recalled Amr ibn al-As act as precedent in order to remove this man's shamefulness and said, "O Bisr, no matter. There is nothing to feel shameful about it in view of `Amr ibn al-As's precedent before you."

of His qualities. Hearts cannot entertain belief about His nature. Analysis and division cannot be applied to Him. Eyes and hearts cannot compare Him.

Part of the Same Sermon:

O servants of Allah! Take lesson from useful items of instruction and shining indications. Be cautioned by effective items of warning. Get benefit from preaching and admonition. It is as though the claws of death are pressed in you, the connection of hope and desires has been cut asunder, hard affairs have befallen you and your march is towards the place where everyone has to go, namely death. Hence, with every person there is a driver and a witness (Holy Quran, 50: 21). The driver drives him towards resurrection while the witness furnishes testimony about his deeds.

Part of the same sermon (about Paradise):

In Paradise, there are high classes and different abodes. Its boundary never ends. He who stays in it will never depart from it. He who is endowed with everlasting abode in it will not get old and its resident will not face want.

Sermon 85

About Getting Ready for the next World and Following Allah's Commandments:

Allah knows hidden matters and is aware of inner feelings. He encompasses everything. He has control over everything and power over everything. Everyone of you should do whatever he has to do during his days of life before the approach of death. In its leisure before his occupation and during the breathing of his breath before it is overtaken by suffocation, he should provide for himself and his journey and should collect provisions from his place of halt for his place of stay.

So remember Allah, O people! about what He has asked you in His Book to take care of and about His rights that He has entrusted to you. Verily, Allah has not created you in vain nor left you unbridled nor let you alone in ignorance and gloom. He has defined what you should leave behind, taught you your acts, ordained your death and sent down the Book (Holy Quran) explaining everything (Holy Quran, 16: 89). He has made His Prophet (ص) live among you for a long time till He completed for him

and for you a message sent through the Holy Quran—namely the religion liked and clarified through him His good and evil acts, His prohibitions and His commands.

He placed before you His arguments and exhausted his excuses upon you. He put forth to you His promises and warned you of severe retribution. You should, therefore, make full atonement during your remaining days and let yourselves practice endurance in these days. These days are fewer as against the many days during which you have shown obliviousness and heedlessness towards admonition. Do not allow time to yourselves because it will put you on the path of wrong-doers and do not be easy-going because this will push you towards sinfulness.

O servants of Allah! The best advise for himself is he who is the most obedient to Allah and the most deceiving for himself is he who is the most disobedient to Allah. Deceived is he who deceived his own self. Enviable is he whose faith is safe. Fortunate is he who takes lessons from others, while unfortunate is he who falls victim to his desires. You should know that even the smallest hypocrisy is like believing in more than one Allah and keeping company of people who follow their desires is the key to obliviousness from religion and is the seat of Satan.

Be on your guard against falsehood because it is contrary to faith. A truthful person is on the height of salvation and dignity, while the liar is on the edge of ignominy and degradation. Do not be jealous because jealousy eats away faith just as fire eats away dried wood. Do not bear malice because it is a scraper (of virtues). And know that desires make one forgetful and make memory oblivious. You should falsify desire because it is a deception and he who has desires is in deceit.

Sermon 86

Qualities of a Faithful Believer:

O servants of Allah! The most fearful of Allah is one whom Allah has given power (to act) against his own passions, so that his inner side is (submerged in) grief and the outside is covered with fear. The lamp of guidance is burning in his heart. He has provided entertainment for the day that is to befall him. He regards what is distant to be near himself and takes the dark to be light. He looks at and perceives; he remembers (Allah) and enhances (the tempo of his) actions. He drinks sweet water to whose source his way has been made easy. So he drinks to satisfaction

and takes the level path. He has taken off the clothe s of desires and has rid himself of worries except one worry peculiar to him. He is safe from misguidance and the company of people who follow their passions. He has become the key to the doors of guidance' and the lock for the doors of destruction.

He has seen his way and is walking on it. He knows his pillar (of guidance) and has crossed over his deep water. He has caught hold of the most reliable supports and the strongest ropes. He is on that level of conviction which is like the brightness of the sun. He has set himself for Allah, the Glorified One, for performance of the most sublime acts by facing all that befalls him and takes every step needed for it. He is the lamp in darkness. He is the dispeller of all blindness, key to the obscure, remover of complexities and a guide in vast deserts. When he speaks he (makes himself understood) whereas when he remains silent then it is safe to do so. He does everything only for Allah and so Allah also makes him His own. Consequently, he is like the mines of His faith and a stump in His earth. He has enjoined upon himself (to follow) justice.

The first step of his justice is the rejection of desires from his heart. He describes right and acts according to it. There is no good which he has not aimed at nor any likely place (of virtue) of the Holy Quran., therefore, the Holy Quran is his guide and leader. He gets down when the Holy Quran puts down his weight and he settles where the Holy Quran settles him down.

Characteristics of an Unfaithful Believer:

While the other (kind of) man is he who calls himself learned but he is not so. He has gleaned ignorance from the ignorant and misguidance from the misguided. He has set for the people a trap (made) of the ropes of deceit and untrue speech. He takes the Holy Quran according to his own views and right after his passions. He makes people feel safe from big sins and takes light the serious crimes. He says that he is waiting for (clarification) of doubts but he remains plunged the rein and that he keeps aloof from innovations but actually he is immersed in them. His shape is that of a man, but his heart is that of a beast. He does not know the door of guidance to follow nor the door of misguidance to keep aloof therefrom. These are the living-dead bodies.

About the Descendants (Itra) of the Holy Prophet (ص):

So where are you going?! (Holy Quran, 81: 26); How are you then turned away?! (Holy Quran, 6: 95; 10: 34; 35: 3; 40: 62). Ensigns (of guidance) are standing, indications (of virtue) are clear and the minarets (of light) have been fixed. Where are you being taken astray and how are you groping while you have among you the descendants of the Prophet (ص) ? they are the reins of Right, ensigns of Faith and tongues of truth. Accord to them the same good status as you accord to the Holy Quran and come to them (for quenching the thirst of guidance) as the thirsty camels approach the water spring.

O people take this saying of the last of the prophets that he who dies from among us is not dead and he who decays (after dying) from among us does not really decay. Do not say what you do not understand because most of the Right is in what you deny. Accept the argument of one against whom you have no argument. It is I. Did I not act before you on the greater thiqal (ath-thiqal al-akbar, i.e. The Holy Quran) and did I not retain among you smaller thiqal (ath-thiqal al-asghar, i.e. the descendants of the Prophet [ص]) ? I fixed among you the standard of faith and I taught you the limits of lawful and unlawful. I clothed you with the garments of safety with my justice and spread for you (the carpet of) virtue by my words and deeds.

I showed you high manners through myself. Do not exercise your imagination about what the eye cannot see or the mind cannot conceive.

Part of the Same Sermon about Banu Umayyah:

Till people begin thinking that the world is attached to the Umayyads, would be showering its benefits to them and lead them to its clear spring for watering and that their whip and sword will not be removed from the people. Whoever thinks which they would suck for a while then vomit out the whole of it.

The hadith of the Prophet (ص) referred to above is a definite proof of the view that the life of any one from among Ahlul-Bayt (ع) (Household of the Holy Prophet [ص]) does not come to an end. It is apparent that death makes no difference in their sense of living, although the human intelligence is unable to comprehend the conditions and happenings of that life. There are many truths beyond the world of senses

which the human mind cannot yet understand. Who can say how, in the narrow corner of the grave where it is not possible even to breath, replies will be given to the questions of the angels Munkar and Nakir? Similarly, what is the meaning of life of the martyrs in the cause of Allah, who have neither sense nor motion, can neither see nor hear? Although to us they appear to be dead, yet the Holy Quran testifies to their life.

And say not of those who are slain in the path of Allah that they are dead; Nay, (they are) living, but you perceive not. (Holy Quran, 2: 154)

At another place, He (Allah) says the following about their life:

Reckon not those who are slain in the way of Allah, to be dead; Nay! alive they are with their Master being sustained. (Holy Quran, 3: 169)

When restriction has been placed on the minds and tongues even with regard to the common martyrs that they should not be called dead nor considered dead, how would not those individuals whose necks were reserved for swords and plates of poison be living for all times to come?

About their bodies, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has said that by the passage of time no signs of oldness or decay occur in them, but they remain in the same state in which they fell as martyrs. There should be nothing strange in it because dead bodies preserved through material means still exit. When it is possible to do so through material means will it be out of the Power of the Omnipotent Creator to preserve against change and decay the bodies of those upon whom he has bestowed the sense of everlasting life? Thus about the martyrs of Badr, the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following: "Shroud them even with their wounds and flowing blood because when they would rise on the Day of Judgement blood would be pushing out of their throats."

Al-thiqal al-akbar implies the Holy Quran, while Al-thiqal al-asghar means Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (Household of the Holy Prophet [ص]) as in the Prophet's saying: "Verily, I am leaving among you (the) two precious things (of high estimation and of care), the reference is to Holy Quran and Ahl al-Bayt (ع)." There are several reasons for using this word. Firstly, Al-thiqal means the kit of a traveller; since the kit is greatly in need, it is protected carefully. Secondly, it means a precious thing; since this is of a great importance, one is bound to follow the injunctions of the Holy

Quran and the actions of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) in its regard. So, they have been called "precious things". Since Allah has made arrangements for the protection of the Holy Quran and Ahl al-Bayt (ع) till the Last Day, they have been called al-thaqalayn. The Prophet (ص), before leaving this world for the next, declared them to be his valuable possessions, ordering people to safeguard them. Thirdly, they have been called al-thaqalayn (two precious things) in view of their purity and high value. Thus ibn Hajar al-Haytami writes the following:

The Prophet (ص) has called the Holy Quran and his Descendants as al-thaqalayn (the two precious [or weighty] things) because Al-thiqal means a pure, chaste and preserved thing and either of these two were really so, each of them is the treasure of the Divine knowledge and a source of scholarly secrets and religious commandments. For that reason the Prophet (ص) desired the people to follow them and to stick to them and to secure knowledge from them. Among them, the most deserving of attachment is the Imam and Scholar of the family of the Prophet (ص) namely Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah honor his face) because of his great insight and copiousness of knowledge which we have already described; refer to Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, p.90.

Since the Prophet (ص) has, with regard to apparent implication, attributed the Holy Quran to Allah and the descendants to himself, in keeping with the natural status the Holy Quran has been called the bigger weight while the descendants, the smaller weight.; otherwise, from the point of view of being followed both are equal and from the point of view of utility in the development of character there can be no question in the status of the speaking party (Ahl al-Bayt [ع]) being higher than the silent one (the Holy Quran).

Sermon 87

About the Division of the Community into Factions:

So now, certainly, Allah did not break the neck of any unruly tyrant in this world except after allowing him time and opportunity and did not join the broken bone of any people (umma) until He did not inflict calamity and distress upon them. Even less than what sufferings and misfortunes have yet to fall upon you or have already befallen you are

enough for giving lessons. Every man with a heart is not intelligent, every ear does not listen and every eye does not see.

I wonder and there is no reason why I should not wonder, about the faults of these groups who have introduced alterations in their religious pleas, who do not move on the footsteps of their Prophet (ص) nor follow the actions of the vicegerent. They do not believe in the unknown and do not avoid the evil. They act on the doubts and tread in (the way of) their passions. For them good is whatever they consider good and evil is whatever they consider evil. Their reliance for resolving distress is on themselves. Their confidence with regard to dubious matters is on their own opinions as if everyone of them is the Leader (Imam) of himself. Whatever he has decided himself he considers to have been taken from reliable sources and strong factors.

Sermon 88

About the Holy Prophet (ص):

Allah sent the Prophet (ص) when the mission of other Prophets had stopped and the peoples were in slumber a long time. Evils were raising heads, all matters were under disruption and in flames of wars, while the world was devoid of brightness and full of open deceitfulness. Its leaves had turned yellow and there was absence of hope about its fruits. Water had gone underground. The minarets of guidance had disappeared and signs of destruction had appeared. It was stern to its people and frowned in the face of its seeker. Its fruit was vice and its food was carcass. Its inner outfit was fear and outer cover was the sword.

So take lesson, O servants of Allah, and recall that (evil doing) with which your fathers and brothers are entangled and for which they have to account. By my life, your time is not much behind theirs, nor have long periods or centuries lapsed between you and them, nor are you much distant from when you were in their loins.

By Allah, whatever the Prophet (ص) told them, I am here telling you the same and whatever you hear today is not different from what they heard yesterday. The eyes that were opened for them and the hearts that were made for them at that time, just the same have been given to you at this time. By Allah, you have not been told anything that they did not know and you have not been deprived of anything which they were

deprived of. Certainly you have been afflicted by a calamity (which is like a she-camel) whose nose-string is moving about and whose strap is loose. So in whatever condition these deceitful people are should not deceive you because it is just a long shadow whose term is fixed.

Sermon 89

Allah's Attributes; Some Other Pieces of Advice:

Praise be to Allah Who is well-known without being seen, Who creates without pondering, Who has even been existent when there was no sky with domes, nor curtains with lofty doors, nor gloomy night, nor peaceful ocean, nor mountains with broad pathways, nor curved mountain roads, nor earth of spread floors, nor self-reliant creatures. He is the Originator of creation and their Master. He is the Allah of the creation and its feeder. The sun and the moon are steadily moving in pursuit of His will. They make every fresh thing old and every distant thing near.

He distributed their sustenance and has counted their deeds and acts, the number of their breaths, their concealed looks and whatever is hidden in their bosoms. He knows their places of stay and places of last resort in the loins and wombs till they reach their end.

His punishment on the enemies is harsh despite the extent of His Mercy and His compassion toward His friends is vast despite His harsh punishment. He overpowers one who wants to overcome Him and destroys one who clashes with Him. He disgraces one who opposes Him and gains sway over one who bears hostility toward Him. He is sufficient for one who relies on Him. He gives to one who asks of Him. He repays one who lends to Him. He rewards one who thanks Him.

O servants of Allah! Weigh yourselves before you are weighed and assess yourselves before you are assessed. Breath before suffocation of the throat. Be submissive before you are harshly driven.

Sermon 90

This sermon is known as the sermon of Skeletons[150] (Khutbatul-Ashbah), and it holds one of the highest positions among the sermons of

[150]The name of this sermon is the sermon of *al-Ashbah*. *Ashbah* is the plural of *shabah* which means skeleton, since it contains a description of angels and other kinds of beings, it has thus been named. The grounds for being angry

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah has related from Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) saying: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon from the pulpit of (the mosque of) Kufa when someone asked him, 'O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! Describe Allah for us in such a way that we may imagine that we see Him with eyes so that our love and knowledge may increase about Him.' Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) became angry at this (request of the inquirer) and ordered the Muslims to gather in the mosque. So many Muslims gathered in the mosque that the place was over-crowded. Imam Ali (ع) ibn Abu Talib (ع) ascended the pulpit while he was still in a state of anger and his color was changed. Having praised and extolled Allah and sought His blessings on the Prophet (ص), he said the following:

About Allah:

Praise be to Allah Whom refusal to give away and stinginess do not reach and Whom munificence and generosity do not make poor, although everyone who gives away loses (to that extent) except He and every miser is blamed for his niggardliness. He obliges through beneficial bounties and plentiful gifts and grants. The whole creation is His dependents (in sustenance). He has guaranteed their livelihood and ordained their sustenance. He has prepared the way for those who turn to Him and those who seek what is with Him. He is as generous about what He is asked as He is about that for which He is not asked. He is the First for whom there was no before so that there could not be anything before Him. He is the Last for whom there is no after, so that there could not be anything after Him. Time does not change over Him, so as to admit of any change of condition about Him. He is not in any place so as to allow Him movement (from one place to another).

If He gives away all that the mines of the mountains emit of the gold, silver, pearls and cuttings of coral which the shells of the ocean vomit out, it would not affect his munificence, nor diminish the extent of what He has. (In fact) He would still have such treasures of bounty as would not decrease by the demands of the creatures because He is that generous. Being Whom the begging of beggars cannot make poor nor the pertinacity of those who beseech make miser.

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with the inquirer was that his request was unconnected with the obligations of Sharī`a and beyond the limits of human capacity.

Attributes of Allah as Described in the Holy Quran:

Then look at the inquirer, be confined to those of His attributes which the Holy Quran had described and seek light from the glory of its guidance. Leave to Allah that knowledge which Satan has prompted you to seek and which neither the Holy Quran enjoins you to seek nor is there any trace of it in the actions or sayings of the Prophet (ص) and other leaders (Imams) of guidance. This is the extreme limit of Allah's claim upon you. Be informed that firm in knowledge are those who refrain from opening the curtains that lie against the unknown and their acknowledgment of ignorance about the details of the hidden unknown prevents them from further probing. Allah praises them for their admission that they are unable to get knowledge not allowed to them. They do not go deep into the discussion of what is not enjoined upon them about knowing Him and they call it firmness. Be content with this and do not limit the Greatness of Allah after the measure of your own intelligence, or else you would be among the destroyed ones.

He is Powerful, such that when the imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the extremity of His power, the mind, making itself free of the dangers of evil thoughts tries to find Him in the depth of His realm, the hearts long to grasp realities of His attributes and the openings of intelligence penetrate beyond description in order to secure knowledge about His Being, crossing the dark pitfalls of the unknown and concentrating towards him, He would turn them back. They would return defeated admitting that the reality of His knowledge cannot be comprehended by such random efforts, nor can an iota of the sublimity of His Honor enter the understanding of thinkers.

Allah's Creation:

He originated the creation without any example which He could follow and without any specimen prepared by any known creator that was before Him. He showed us the realm of His Might and such wonders which speak of His Wisdom. The confession of the created things that their existence owes itself to Him made us realize that argument has been furnished about knowing Him (so that there is no excuse against it). The signs of His creative power and standard of His wisdom are fixed in the wonderful things He has created. Whatever He has created is an argument in His favor and a guide towards Him. Even a silent thing is a guide towards Him as though it speaks and its guidance towards the Creator is clear.

(O Allah!) I testify that he who likens You with the separateness of the limbs or with the joining of the extremities of his body did not acquaint his inner self with knowledge about You and his heart did not secure conviction to the effect that there is no partner for You. It is as though he has not heard the (wrongful) followers declaiming their false gods by saying, "By Allah! We are certainly in manifest error when we equaled you with the master of the worlds" (Holy Quran, 26: 97-98). They are wrong who liken You to their idols and outfit You with apparel of the creatures by their imagination, attribute to You parts of body by their own thinking and consider You after the creatures of various types, through the working of their intelligence. I testify that whoever equated You with anything out of Your creation took a match for You and whoever takes a match for You is an unbeliever, according to what is stated in thy unambiguous verses and indicated by the testimony of Your clear arguments. (I also testify that) You are that Allah Who cannot be confined in (the fetters of) intelligence so as to admit change of condition by entering its imagination nor in the shackles of mind so as to become limited and an object of alterations.

Part of the Same Sermon:

About the Greatest Perfection in Allah's Creation:

He has fixed limits for everything He has created and has made the limits firm and He has fixed its working and has made the working delicate. He has fixed its direction and it does not transgress the limits of its status nor fall short of reaching the end of its aim. It did not disobey when it was commanded to move at His will. How could it do so when all matters are governed by His will. He is the Producer of a variety of things without exercise of imagination, without the urge of an impulse hidden in Him, without (the benefit of) any experiment taken from the vicissitudes of time and without any partner who might have assisted Him in creating wonderful things.

Thus, the creation was completed by His order and it bowed to His obedience and responded to His call. The laziness of any slug or the inertness of any excuse-finder did not prevent it from doing so. So He straightened the curves of the things and fixed their limits. With His power He created coherence in their contradictory parts and joined together the factors of similarity. Then He separated them in varieties which differ in limits, quantities, properties and shapes. All this is new

creation. He made them firm and shaped them according as He wished and invented them.

Part of the same sermon: Description of the Sky:

He has arranged the depressions and elevations of the openings of the sky. He has joined the breadths of its breaches and has joined them with one another. He has made easy the approach to its heights for those (angels) who come down with His commands and those (angels) who go up with the deeds of the creatures. He called it when it was yet (in the form of) vapor. At once the links of its joints joined up. Then Allah opened up its closed door and put the sentinels of meteors at its holes and held them with His hands (i.e. power) from falling into the vastness of air.

He commanded it to remain stationary in obedience to His commands. He made its sun the bright indication for its day and its moon the gloomy indication for its night. He then put them in motion in their orbits and ordained their (pace of) movement in the stages of their paths in order to distinguish with their help between night and day and in order that the reckoning of years and calculations may be known by their fixed movements. Then He hung in its vastness its sky and put the rein its decoration consisting of small bright pearls and lamp-like stars. He shot at the over-hearers arrows of bright meteors. He put them in motion on their appointed routine and made them into fixed stars, moving stars, descending stars, ascending stars, ominous stars and lucky stars.

Part of the same sermon:

Describing the Angels:

Then Allah, the Glorified One, created for inhabiting of His skies and populating the higher strata of his realm new (a variety of) creatures namely the angels. With them He filled the openings of its cavities and populated them with the vastness of its circumference. In between the openings of these cavities there resounds the voices of angels glorifying Him in the enclosures of sublimity, (behind) curtains of concealment and in veils of His Greatness. And behind this resounding which deafens the ears there is the glory of light which defies the approach of sight to it and consequently the sight stands, disappointed at its limitation.

He created them in different shapes and with diverse characteristics. They have wings. They glorify the sublimity of His Honor. They do not appropriate to themselves His skill that shows itself

in creation. Nor do they claim they create anything in which He is unparalleled. “But they are rather honored creatures who do not take precedence over Him in uttering anything and they act according to His command” (Holy Quran, 21: 26-27). He has made them the trustees of His revelation and sent them to prophets as holders of His injunctions and prohibitions. He has immunized them against the waviness of doubts. Consequently no one among them goes astray from the path of His will. He has helped them with the benefits of succor and has covered their hearts with humility and peace. He has opened for them doors of Submission to His Glories. He has fixed for them bright minarets as signs of His Oneness. The weights of sins do not burden them and the rotation of nights and days does not make them move. Doubts do not attack with arrows the firmness of their faith. Misgivings do not assault the bases of their beliefs. The spark of malice does not ignite among them. Amazement does not tarnish what knowledge of Him their hearts possess, or His greatness and awe of His glory that resides in their bosoms. Evil thoughts do not lean towards them to affect their imagination with their own rust.

Among them are those who are in the frame of heavy clouds, or in the height of lofty mountains, or in the gloom of over-powering darkness. And there are those whose feet have pierced the lowest boundaries of the earth. These feet are like white ensigns which have gone forth into the vast expanse of wind. Under them blows the light wind which retains them until its last end.

Occupation in His worship has made them carefree and realities of Faith have served as a link between them and His knowledge. Their belief in Him has made them concentrate on Him. They long for Him not for others. They have tasted the sweetness of His knowledge and have drunk from the satiating cup of His love. The roots of His fear have been implanted in the depth of their hearts. Consequently they have bent their straight backs through His worship. The length of the humility and extreme nearness has not removed from them the rope of their fear.

They do not entertain pride so as to make much of their acts. Their humility before the glory of Allah does not allow them to esteem their own virtues. Languor does not affect them despite their long affliction. Their longings (for Him) do not lessen so that they might turn away from hope in (Allah) their Sustainer. The tips of their tongues do not get dry by constant prayers (to Allah). Engagements (in other matters) do not betake them so as to turn their (loud) voices for Him into faint ones. Their shoulders do not get displaced in the postures of worship. They do

not move their necks (this and that way) for comfort in disobedience of His command. Follies of negligence do not act against their determination to strive and the deceptions of desires do not overcome their courage.

They regard the master of the Throne (Allah) as the store for the day of their need. Because of their love (for Him) they turn to Him even when others turn to the creatures. They do not reach the ending limit of His worship. Their passionate fondness for His worship does not turn them except to the springs of their own hearts, springs which are never devoid of His hope and His fear. Fear of (Allah) never leaves them so that they might slacken in their efforts, nor have temptations entrapped them so that they might prefer this light search over their (serious) effort.

They do not consider their past (virtuous) deeds as big, for if they had considered them big then fear would have wiped away hopes from their hearts. They did not differ (among themselves) about their Sustainer as a result of Satan's control over them. The vice of separation from one another did not disperse them. Rancor and mutual malice did not overpower them. Ways of wavering did not divide them. Differences of degree of courage did not render them into divisions. Thus they are devotees of faith. Neither crookedness (of mind), nor excess, nor lethargy nor languor breaks them from its rope. There is not the thinnest point in the skies but there is an angel over it in prostration (before Allah) or (busy) in quick performance (of His commands). By long worship of their Sustainer they increase their knowledge and the honor of their Sustainer increases in their hearts.

Part of the Same Sermon: Description of the Earth and its Expansion over Water:

Allah spread the earth on stormy and tumultuous waves and the depths of swollen seas, where waves clashed with each other and high surges leapt over one another. They emitted foam like the he-camel at the time of sexual excitement. So the tumult of the stormy water was subdued by the weight of the earth, when the earth pressed it with its chest its shooting agitation eased and when the earth rolled on it with its shoulder bones the water meekly submitted. Thus, after tumult of its surges it became tame and overpowered and an obedient prisoner of the shackles of disgrace, while the earth spread itself and became solid in the stormy depth of this water. (In this way) the earth put an end to the pride, self conceit, high status and superiority of the water and muzzled the intrepidity of its flow. Consequently, it stopped after its stormy flow, settling down after its tumult.

When the excitement of water subsided under the earth's sides and under the weight of the high and lofty mountains placed on its shoulders, Allah flowed springs of water from its high tops and distributed them through plains and low places and moderated their movement by fixed rocks and high mountain tops. Then its trembling came to a standstill because of the penetration of mountains in (various) parts of its surface and their being fixed in its deep areas and their standing on its plains. Then Allah created the vastness between the earth and firmament and provided the blowing wind for its inhabitants. Then He directed its inhabitants to spread all over its convenient places. Thereafter He did not leave the barren tracts of the earth alone where high portions lacked in water-springs and where rivers could not find their way, but created floating clouds which enliven the unproductive areas and grow vegetation.

He made a big cloud by collecting together small clouds and when water collected in it and lightning began to flash on its sides and the flash continued under the white clouds as well as the heavy ones He sent it heavily raining. The cloud was hanging towards the earth and southerly winds were squeezing it into shedding its water like a she-camel bending down for milking. When the cloud prostrated itself on the ground and delivered all the water it carried on itself Allah grew vegetation on the plain earth and herbage on dry mountains. As a result, the earth felt pleased at being decorated with its gardens and wondered at her outfit of soft vegetation and the ornaments of its blossoms. Allah made all this the means of sustenance for the people and feed for the beasts. He has opened up highways in its expanse and has established minarets (of guidance) for those who tread on its highways.

On the Creation of Man and the Sending of the Prophet (ص):

Once He had spread out the earth and enforced His commands, He chose Adam (ع) as the best of His creation, making him the first [human being] to create. He made him to reside in Paradise and arranged for his eating in it and also indicated from what He had prohibited him. He told him that proceeding towards it meant His disobedience and endangering his own status. But Adam did what he had been refrained from, just as Allah already knew beforehand. Consequently, Allah sent him down after (accepting) his repentance, to populate His earth with his progeny and to serve as a proof and plea for Him among his creatures.

Even when He made Adam die He did not leave them without one who would serve among them as proof and plea for His Godhead and serve as the link between them and His knowledge. But He provided to them the proofs through His chosen Messengers and bearers of the trust of His Message, age after age till the process came to end with Prophet Muhammad (ص) and His pleas and warnings reached finality.

He ordained livelihoods with plenty and with paucity. He distributed them narrowly as well as profusely. He did it with justice to test whomever He desired, with prosperity or with destitution and to test through it the gratefulness or endurance of the rich and the poor. Then He coupled plenty with the misfortune of destitution, safety with the distresses of calamities and pleasures of enjoyment with pangs of grief. He created fixed ages and made them long or short and earlier or later, ending them with death. He had made death capable of pulling up the ropes of ages and cutting them asunder. He[151] knows the secrets of those

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[151]The eloquence with which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has thrown on Allah's attributes of knowledge and the sublime words in which he has pictured the all-engrossing quality of His knowledge cannot but impress the mind of the most die-hard opponent. Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written: "If Aristotle, who believed that God is only aware of the universe and not of its particulars, had heard this speech, his heart, too, would have inclined, his hair would have stood on end, and his thinking would have undergone a dramatic change." Do you not see the brightness, force, vehemence, sublimity, glory, seriousness and ripeness of this speech? Besides these qualities, there is sweetness, colorfulness, delicacy and smoothness in it. I have not found any utterance similar to it. Of course, if there is any utterance matching it, that can be the word of Allah only. And there is no wonder in it because he is an offshoot of the same tree (of the Prophet (ص) Ibrahim who set up the Unity of Allah), a tributary of the same river and a reflection of the same light, as we read in *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 7, pp. 23-24.

Those who regard Allah to possess only overall knowledge argue that since details undergo changes, to believe Him to have knowledge of the changing details would necessitate changes in His knowledge but since knowledge is the same as His Being, His Being would have to be regarded as the object of change the result of which would be that He would have to be taken as having come into existence. In this way He would lose the attribute of being from ever. This is a very deceptive fallacy because changes in the object of knowledge can lead to changes in the One Who knows everything only when it is assumed that the One Who knows everything does not already possess knowledge of these changes. But since all the forms of change and alteration are so strikingly obvious before Him there is no reason that with the changes in the objects of knowledge that He too should be regarded as changeable, although really this change is confined to the object of knowledge and does not affect knowing in itself.

who conceal them, the secret conversation of those who engage in it, the inner feelings of those who indulge in guesses, the established certainties, the inklings of the eyes, the inner contents of hearts and the depths of the unknown. He also knows what can be heard only by bending the holes of the ears, the summer resorts of ants and winter abodes of the insects, resounding of the cries of wailing women and the sound of steps. He also knows the spots in the inner sheaths of leaves where fruits grow, the hiding places of beasts namely caves in mountains and valleys, the hiding holes of mosquitoes on the trunks of trees and their herbage, the sprouting points of leaves in the branches, the dripping points of semen passing through passages of loins, small rising clouds and the big giant ones, the drops of rain in the thick clouds, the particles of dust scattered by whirlwinds through their skirts, the lines erased by rain floods, the movements of insects on sand-dunes, the nests of winged creatures on the cliffs of mountains and the singing of chattering birds in the gloom of their brooding places.

And He knows whatever has been treasured by the mother-of-pearls and covered under ocean waves, all that which is concealed under the darkness of night and all that on which the light of day is shining, as well as all that on which sometimes darkness prevails and sometimes light shines, the trace of every footstep, the feel of every movement, the echo for every sound, the motion of every lip, the abode of every living being, the weight of every particle, the sobs of every sobbing heart and whatever is on the earth like fruits of trees or falling leaf, or settling place of semen, or the congealing of blood or clot and the developing of life and embryo.

On all this, He suffers no trouble and no impediment hampers Him in the preservation of what he created nor any languor or grief hinders Him from the enforcement of commands and management of the creatures, His knowledge penetrates through them and they are within His counting. His justice extends to all of them and His bounty encompasses them despite their falling short of what is due to Him.

O Lord! You deserve handsome description and the highest esteem. If wish is directed towards You, You are the best to be wished for. If hope is reposed in You, You are the most Honored to be hoped for. O Lord! You hast bestowed on me such power that I do not praise any one other than You and I do not eulogize any one save You. I do not direct my praise towards others who are sources of disappointment and centers of misgivings. You hast kept away my tongue from the praises of human beings and eulogies of the created and the sustained. O Lord! Every who praises has on whom he praises the right of reward and

recompense. Certainly, I have turned to You with my eye at the treasures of Your Mercy and stores of forgiveness.

O Lord! here stands one who has singled You with Oneness that is Your due and has not regarded any one deserving of these praises and eulogies except You. My want towards You is such that nothing except Your generosity can cure its destitution, nor provide for its need except Your obligation and Your generosity. So do grant us in this place Your will and make us free from stretching hands to anyone other than You. "Certainly, You are powerful over everything" (Holy Quran, 66: 8).

Allah is the Guarantor of sustenance and Provider of livelihood as He says the following:

> No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on Allah. (Holy Quran, 11: 6)

But His being guarantor means that He has provided ways for everyone to live and earn livelihood and has allowed everyone equal shares in forests, mountains, rivers, mines and in the vast earth and has given everyone the right to make use of them. His bounties are not confined to any single person, nor is the door of His sustenance closed to any one. Thus, Allah says the following:

We do aid everyone: These and (also) those, out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined. (Holy Quran, 17: 20)

If someone does not secure these things through languor or ease and sits effortless, it is not possible that livelihood would reach his door. Allah has laid the table with multifarious feeds but to get them it is necessary to extend the hand. He has deposited pearls in the bottom of the sea but it requires diving to get them out. He has filled the mountains with rubies and precious stones but they cannot be had without digging the stones. The earth contains treasures of growth but benefit cannot be drawn from them without sowing of seed. Heaps of edibles lie scattered on all four sides of the earth but they cannot be collected without the trouble of travelling. Thus, Allah says the following:

Traverse, then, its (earth's) broad sides and eat of His provision.(Holy Quran, 67: 15)

Allah providing livelihood does not mean that no effort is needed in searching livelihood, or no going out of the house is required, for it and that livelihood should itself finds its way to the seeker. The meaning of His being the provider of livelihood is that He has given earth the property of growing. He has sent rain from clouds for germination, created fruits, vegetables and grains. All this is from Allah but securing them is connected with human effort. Whoever will strive will reap the benefits of his efforts and whoever abstains from strife would face the consequences of his idleness and laziness. Accordingly Allah says the following:

And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for. (Holy Quran, 53: 39)

The order of universe hinges on the maxim "You reap what you sow". It is wrong to expect germination without sowing, to hope for results without effort. Limbs and faculties have been given solely to be kept active. Thus, Allah addressed Mary and says the following:

And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you dates fresh (and) ripe. Then eat and drink and refresh the eye. (Holy Quran, 19: 25-26)

Allah provided the means for Mary's sustenance. He did not however pluck the dates from the tree and put them in her la, p. This was because so far as production of food goes it is His concern. So he made the tree green, put fruits on it and ripened the fruits. But when the stage arrived for plucking them He did not intervene. He just recalled to Mary her job namely that she should now move her hand and get her food.

Again, if His providing the livelihood means that whatever is given is given by Him and whatever is received from Him, then whatever a man would earn and eat and in whatever manner he would obtain it would be permissible for him, whether he obtains it by the ft, bribery, oppression or violence. It would mean Allah's act and the food would be that given by Him, wherein he would have no free will and where anything is out of the limits of free action there is no question of permissible or forbidden for it, nor is there any liability to account for it. But when it is not actually so and there is the question of permissible and forbidden then it should give bearing on human actions, so that it could be questioned whether it was secured in lawful or unlawful actions and manners. Of course, where He has not bestowed the power of seeking the livelihood, there He has taken upon Himself the responsibility to provide

the livelihood. Consequently He has managed for the feeding of the embryo in the mother's womb and it reaches him there according to its needs and requirements. But when this very young life enters the wide world and picks up energy to move its limbs, then it can not get its food from the source without moving his lips (for sucking the milk).

In the management of the affairs of this world, Allah has connected the sequence with the cause of human acts as a result of which the power of action in man does not remain idle. In the same way He had made these actions dependent on His own will, so man should not rely on his own power of action and forget the Creator. This is the issue of the will between two wills in the controversy of "free will" versus "compulsion". Just as in the entire universe, nature's universal and sovereign law is in force, in the same way the production and distribution of food also is provided in a set manner under the dual force of the Divine ordainment of human effort. And this is somewhere less and somewhere more depending on the proportion of human effort and the aim of the Divine ordainment. Since He is the Creator of the means of livelihood and the powers of seeking food have also been bestowed by Him, the paucity or plenty of livelihood has been attributed to Him because He has fixed different and separate measures for livelihood keeping in view the difference in efforts and actions and the good of the creatures. Somewhere there is poverty and somewhere affluence, somewhere distress and somewhere comfort and some one is enjoying pleasure while some one else is suffering the hardships of want.

The Holy Quran says the following:

He amplifies the sustenance of whomsoever He pleases and straitens; Verily, He knows all things. (Holy Quran, 42: 12)

In sermon 23, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to this matter thus: "The Divine command descends from the sky towards the earth with whatever is ordained for everyone, whether less or more, just like rain drops.

So, there is a fixed process and manner for the benevolence of rain namely that vapors rise from the sea with the store of water, spread over in the sky in the shape of dark clouds then ooze the water by drops till they form themselves in regular lines. They irrigate plains as well as high lands thoroughly and proceed onwards to collect in the low areas, so that the thirsty may drink it, animals may use it and dry lands may be watered from it. In the same way Allah has provided all the means of

livelihood but His bounty follows a particular mode in which there is never a jot of deviation. Thus, Allah says the following:

And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures and We do not send it down but in a known measure. (Holy Quran, 15: 21)

If man's greed and avarice exceeds its bounds, then just as an excess of rain ruins crops instead of growing and bringing them up, so the abundance of the articles of livelihood and the necessities of life would make man obvious of Allah and rouse him to rebellion and unruliness. Consequently, Allah says the following:

And should Allah amplify the sustenance unto his servants, they would certainly rebel in the earth, but He sends it down by measure as He pleases; Verily of His servants, He is All-aware, All-seeing. (Holy Quran, 42: 27)

If He lessens the food then just as a drought makes the land arid and kills the animals, likewise, by closure of the means of livelihood, the human society would be destroyed and so there would remain no means of living and livelihood. Allah accordingly says the following:

Or who is that who can provide you with sustenance should He withhold His sustenance?(Holy Quran, 67: 21)

Consequently, Allah, the Wise, the Omniscient, has put the organization for livelihood on moderate and proportionate lines and in order to emphasize the importance of livelihood and sustenance and to keep them correlated with each other has introduced differences in the distribution of livelihood. Sometimes, this difference and unequal distribution owes itself to the difference of human effort and sometimes it is the consequence of overall arrangement of the affairs of the Universe and the Divine acts of wisdom and objectives. This is so because, if by poverty and want He has tested the poor in endurance and patience, in affluence and wealth there is severe test of the rich by way of thanksgiving and gratifying the rights of others, namely whether the rich person gratifies the claims of the poor and the distressed and whether he takes care of the destitute or not. Again, where there is wealth there would also be dangers of all sorts. Sometimes there would be danger to the wealth and property and sometimes fear of poverty and want.

Consequently, there would be many persons who would be more satisfied and happy for lack of wealth. For them this destitution and want

would be far better than the wealth which might snatch away their comfort and peace. Moreover sometimes this very wealth which one holds dearer than life becomes the cause of loss of one's life. Further, it has also been seen that for as long as wealth was lacking character was above reproach, life was unblemished, but the moment property and wealth changed into plenty the conduct worsened, character became faulty and there appeared the vices of Awine, women and wealth. In such cases the absence of wealth was a blessing. However being ignorant of Allah's objectives man cries out and being affected by transitory distress begins complaining but does not realize from how many vices which could have accrued owing to wealth he has remained aloof. Therefore, if wealth produces conveniences, poverty serves as a guard for the character.

Sermon 91

When People Decided to Swear Allegiance to Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Hand after the Murder of Othman, He Said the Following:

Leave me and seek someone else. We are facing a matter which has (several) faces and colors, which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky and faces are not discernable. You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse. If you leave me then I am the same as you are. It is possible I would listen to and obey whomever you make in charge of your affairs. I am better for you as a counselor than as chief.

With the murder of Othman, the caliphate became vacant and Muslims began to look at Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) whose peaceful conduct, adherence to principles and political acumen had been witnessed by them to a great extent during this long period. Consequently they rushed to swear allegiance on his righteousness in much the same way a traveler who had lost his way, then finding it again rushes towards his destination, as the historian al-Tabari (in Tarikh, Vol. 1, pp. 3066, 3067, 3076) records the following: "People thronged around Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and said, "We want to swear the oath of allegiance to you; you can see what troubles have befallen Islam and how we are being tried with regard to the near in kin of the Prophet (ص)."

But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) declined to accede to their request whereupon these people raised hue and cry and began to shout loudly, "O Abul-Hassan! Do you not witness the ruination of Islam or see the advancing flood of unruliness and mischief? Do you have no fear of Allah?!" Even Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) showed no readiness to consent because he was noticing that the effects of the atmosphere that had come into being after the Prophet (ص) had overcome hearts and minds of the people. Selfishness and lust for power had become rooted in them, their thinking had become affected by materialism and they had become habituated to treating government as the means for securing their ends. Now they would like to materialize the Divine Caliphate too and play with it. In these circumstances it would be impossible to change the mentalities or turn their direction of temperaments. In addition to these ideas he had also seen the end in sight, that these people should have further time to think on it so that on frustration of their material ends hereafter they should not say that the allegiance had been sworn by them under a temporary expediency and timely thought and that nature (rational) thought had not been given to it, just as `Omer's idea was about the first caliphate, which appears from his statement that: "bu Bakr's caliphate came into being without due thought, but Allah saved us from its mischief. If anyone repeats such an affair, you should kill him, as stated in \sect fs22 Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, pp.210, 211; in Al-Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, p.55; in al-Tabari, Vol. 1, p.1822; in Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 2, p.327; in Ibn Hisham, Vol. 4, pp.308-309, and in Ibn Kathir, Vol. 5, p.246.

In short, when their insistence increased beyond limits, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon wherein he clarified that: If you want me for your worldly ends, then I am not ready to serve as your instrument. Leave me and select someone else who may fulfil your ends. You have seen my past life that I am not prepared to follow anything except the Holy Quran and Sunnah and would not give up this principle for securing power. If you select someone else I would pay regard to the laws of the state and the constitution as a peaceful citizen should do. I have not at any stage tried to disrupt the collective existence of the Muslims by inciting rebellion. The same will happen now. Rather, just as keeping the common good in view I have hitherto been giving correct advice, I will not grudge doing the same. If you put me in the same status, it will be better for your worldly ends because in that case I will not have power in my hands so that I could stand in the way of your worldly affairs and create impediment against your heart's wishes. However, if you are determined to swear the oath of allegiance to me, then bear in mind that if

you frown or speak against me, I will force you to tread on the path of right and in the matter of the right I will not care for anyone. If you want to swear the oath of allegiance even at this, you can satisfy your wish."

The impression Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had formed about those people is fully corroborated by later events. Consequently, when those who had sworn allegiance with worldly motives did not succeed in their objectives they broke away and rose against his government with baseless allegations.

Sermon 92[1]

About the Annihilation of the Kharijites, Themischief Mongering of Umayyads and the Vastness of His Knowledge:

So now, Praise and Glorification belong to Allah. O people! I have put out the eye of rebellion. No one except me advanced towards it when its gloom was swelling and its madness was intense. Ask me before

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[152]Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon after the battle of Nahrawan. In it, "mischiefs" implicitly refers to the battles fought in Basra, Siffin and Nahrawān because their nature was different from the battles of the Prophet (ص). There the opposite party was the unbelievers while here the confrontation was with those who had veils of Islam on their faces. So people were hesitant to fight against Muslims and said why they should fight with those who recited the call to the prayers and offered the prayers. Thus, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari did not take part in the Battle of Siffin till the falling of Ammar ibn Yasir as martyr did not prove the opposite party was rebellious. Similarly the presence of companions like Talhah and az-Zubayr who were included in the Foretold Ten on the side of Aisha in Basra and the prayer signs on foreheads of the Kharijites in Nahrawan and their prayers and worships were creating confusion in the minds. In these circumstances only those could have the courage to rise against them were aware of the secrets of their hearts and the reality of their faith. It was the peculiar perception of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and his spiritual courage that he rose to oppose them and testified to the saying of the Holy Prophet (ص): "You will fight after me with the breakers of allegiance (people of Jamal), oppressors (people of Syria) and deviators (the Kharijites) as we read in the following references*: "Al-Mustadrak Ala as-Sahihayn*, al-Hakim, Vol. 3, pp.139-40; *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, Vol6, p.18; *Al-Isti`ab*, Vol. 3, p.1117; *Usd al-Ghaba*, Vol. 4 pp.32, 33; *Tarikh Baghdad*, Vol. 8, p.340; Vol. 13, p. 186, 187; *Tarikh, Ibn Asakir*, Vol. 5, p. 41; *Tarikh Ibn Kathar*, Vol. 7, pp. 304-6; *Majma` az-Zawa'id*, Vol. 7, p. 238; Vol. 9, p. 235; *Sharh al-Mawahib*, Vol. 3, pp. 316-317; *Kanz al-Ummal*, Vol. 6, pp.72,82,88,155,319,391,392; Vol. 8, p.215.

you miss me,[153] because, by Allah, who has my life in His hands, if you ask me anything between now and the Day of Judgement or about the group who will guide a hundred people and also misguide a hundred people, I will tell you who is announcing its march, who is driving it in the front and who is driving it at the rear, the stages where its riding animals will stop for rest and the final place of stay and who among them will be killed and who will die a natural death.

When I am dead hard circumstances and distressing events will befall you. Many persons in the status of asking questions will remain silent with eyes cast down while those in the status of replying will lose courage. This will be at a time when wars will descend upon you with all hardship and days will be so hard on you that you will feel them prolonged because of hardship till Allah will give victory to those remaining virtuous among you.

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[153]After the Holy Prophet (ص) no one except Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) could utter the challenge. Ask whatever you want to. ibn Abdul-Barr in Jami Bayan al-Ilm wa fadlihi, Vol. 1, p.58 and in *Al-Isti`ab*, Vol. 3, p.1103; Ibn al-Athi

r in *Usd al-Ghaba*, Vol. 4, p.22; Ibn Abul-Hadid in *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol7, p. 46; as-Sayyuti in *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, p.171 and ibn Hajar al-Haytami in *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, p.76 have written that "None among the companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) ever said, 'Ask me whatever you want' except Ali ibn Abu Talib." However, among other than the companions a few names do appear in history who did utter such a challenge, such as Ibrahim ibn Hisham al-Makhzumi, Muqatil ibn Sulayman, Qaradah ibn Di'amah, Abd ar-Rahman (Ibn al-Jawzi) and Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i etc. but everyone of them faced disgrace and was forced to take back his challenge. This challenge can be urged only by him who knew the realities of the universe and is aware of the happenings of the future. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) the opener of the door of the Prophet's knowledge as he was, was the only person who was never seen being unable to answer any question on any occasion. This was so much so that even `Umar had to say that AI seek Allāh's protection from the difficulty for the solution of which Ali will not be available. Similarly, the prophesies of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) made about the future proved true word-for-word and served as an index to his vast knowledge, whether they be about the devastation of Banu Umayyah, of the risings of the Kharijites, the wars and destruction by the Tatars, of the attacks of the English, the floods of Basra and the ruination of Kufa. In short when these events are historical realities there is no reason why this challenge of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) should be wondered at.

When mischief comes they confuse (right with wrong) and when they clear away they leave a warning. They cannot be known at the time of approach but are recognized at the time of return. They blow like the blowing of winds, striking some cities and missing others.

Beware that the worst mischief for you in my view is the mischief of Banu Umayyah because it is blind and also creates darkness. Its sway is general but its ill effects are for particular people. He who remains clear-sighted in it will be affected by distress and he who remains blind in it will avoid the distress. By Allah, after me you will find Banu Ummayyah the very worst for yourselves, like the old unruly she-camel who bites with its mouth, beats with its fore-legs, kicks with its hind legs and refuses to be milked. They will remain over you till they will leave among you only those who benefit them or those who do not harm them. Their calamity will continue till your seeking help from them will become like the seeking of help by the slave from his master or of the follower from the leader.

Their mischief will come to you like evil-eyed fear and pre-Islamic fragments, wherein there will be no minaret of guidance nor any sign (of salvation) to be seen. We Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (the Household of the Prophet (ص)) are free from this mischief and we are not among those who will engender it. Thereafter, Allah will dispel it from you like the removal of the skin (from flesh) through him who will humble them, drag them by their necks, make them drink full cups (of hardships), not extend to them anything but sword and not clothe them except with fear. At that time Quraish will wish at the cost of the world and all its contents to find me even only once and just for the duration of the slaughter of a camel in order that I may accept from them (the whole of) that of which at present. I am asking them only a part but they are not giving me.

Sermon 93

Praising Allah and Lauding His Prophets:

Exalted is Allah Whom heights of daring cannot approach and fineness of intelligence cannot find. He is such First that there is no extremity for Him so that He be contained within it, nor is there an end for Him where He will cease (being Existent).

Part of the Same Sermon about the Prophet (ص):

Allah kept the Prophets in the best place and made them stay in the best of way. He moved them in succession from distinguished forefathers to the wombs of chaste women. Whenever a predecessor from among them died, the follower stood up for the cause of the religion of Allah.

About the Holy Prophet (ص) and his Descendants (Itra):

... until this elevation of status by Allah, the Glorified One, reached Muhammad (ص). Allah brought him out of the most distinguished sources of origin and the most honorable places of planting, namely from the same (lineal) tree from which He brought forth other Prophets and from which He selected His trustees. Muhammad's descendants are the best descendants, his kinsmen the best of kin and his lineal tree the best of trees. It grew in esteem and rose in distinction. It has tall branches and unapproachable fruits.

He is the leader (Imam) of all who are steadfast in your fear (of Allah) and the light for all those who seek guidance. He is a lamp whose flame is burning, a meteor whose light is shining and a flint whose spark is bright. His conduct is upright, his behavior is guiding, his speech is decisive and his decision is just. Allah sent him after an interval from the previous Prophets when people had fallen into errors of action and ignorance. May Allah have mercy on you.

May Allah shower His mercy on you! Do act according to the clear signs because the way is straight and leads to the house of safety while you are in the place of seeking Allah's favor and have time and opportunity. The books (of your doings) are open and pens (of angels) are busy (to record your actions) while your bodies are healthy, tongues are free, repentance is accepted and deeds are accorded recognition.

Sermon 94

About the Condition of the People at the Time of the Prophet's Proclamation and about His Actions Having to Do with the Dissemination of His Message:

Allah sent the Prophet (ص) at a time when the people were going astray in perplexity and were moving here and there in mischief. Desires had deflected them and self-conceit had swerved them. Extreme ignorance had made them foolish. They were confounded by the unsteadiness of matters and the evils of ignorance. Then the Prophet (ص) did his best in giving them sincere advice, himself trod on the right path and called (them) towards wisdom and good counsel.

Sermon 95

In Praise of Allah and of the Holy Prophet (ص):

Praise be to Allah Who is the First: nothing is before Him, and He is the Last, nothing is there after Him. He is such Manifest that there is nothing above Him and such Hidden that there is nothing nearer than He.

Part of the Same Sermon about the Holy Prophet (ص):

His place of stay is the best of all places and his origin the noblest of all origins in the minds of honor and the cradles of safety. Hearts of virtuous persons have been inclined towards him and the reins of eyes have been turned towards him. Through him, "Allah buried mutual rancor and put off the flames of rebellion. Through him He gave them affection like brothers and separated those who were together (through unbelief). His speaking is clear and his silence is (indicative of) the tongue.

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[154]In the atmosphere that had been created soon after the Prophet (ص), Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (members of his family) had no course except to remain secluded resulting in the world's continued ignorance of their real qualities and being acquainted with their teachings and attainments. To belittle them and keep them away from authority has been considered as the greatest service to Islam. If Othman's open misdeeds had not given a chance to the Muslims to wake up and open their eyes there will have been no question of allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and temporal authority will have retained the same course as it had so far followed. But all those who could be named for the purpose had no courage to come forward because of their own shortcomings while Mu`awiyah was sitting in his capital away from the center. In these circumstances there was none except Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who could be looked at. Consequently people's eyes hovered around him and the same common people who, following the direction of the wind, had been swearing allegiance to others jumped at him

for swearing allegiance. Nevertheless, this allegiance was not on the count that they regarded his Caliphate as from Allah and him as an Imam (The Divine Leader) to obey as obligatory. It was rather under their own principles which were known as democratic or consultative. However, there was one group who was swearing allegiance to him as a religious obligation regarding his Caliphate as determined by Allah. otherwise, the majority regarded him a ruler like the other Caliphs and as regarding precedence, on the fourth status, or at the level of the common men after the three caliphs. Since the people, the army and the civil servants had been impressed by the beliefs and actions of the previous rulers and immersed in their ways whenever they found anything against their liking they fretted and frowned, evaded war and were ready to rise in disobedience and rebellion. Furthermore, just as among those who fought in *jihad* on the side of the Prophet (ص), there were some seekers of this world and others of the Hereafter. Now, in the same way, there was no dearth of worldly men who were, in appearance, with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) but actually they had connections with Mu`awiyah who has promised some of them positions and had extended to others temptation of wealth. To hold them as Shī`as of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and to blame Shi`ism for this reason is closing the eyes to facts because the beliefs of these people will be the same as of those who regarded Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) fourth in the series. Ibn Abul-Hadid throws light on the beliefs of these persons in clear words:

Whoever observes minutely the events during the period of Caliphate of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) will know that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had been brought to bay because those who knew his real status were very few. The swarming majority did not bear that belief about him which was obligatory to have. They gave precedence to the previous Caliphs over him and held that the criterion of precedence was Caliphate. In this matter, those coming later followed the predecessors and argued that if the predecessors had not the knowledge that the previous Caliphs had precedence over Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) they will not have preferred them to him. Rather, these people knew and took Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as a citizen and subject. Most of those who fought in his company did so on grounds of prestige or Arab partisanship, not on the ground of religion or belief, as we read on p. 72, Vol. 1 of *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*.

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Although Allah gives a respite to the oppressor, His might does not spare him. Allah takes hold of him on the passage of his way and the status of that which suffocates the throats.

By Allah in Whose power my life lies! These people (Mu`awiyah and his men) will overcome you not because they have a better right than you but because of their hastening towards the wrong with their leader and your slowness about my right (to be followed). People are afraid of the oppression of their rulers while I fear the oppression of my subjects.

I called you forward but you did not come. I warned you but you did not listen. I called you secretly as well as openly, but you did not respond. I gave you sincere counsel, but you did not accept it. Are you present like the absent and slaves like masters? I recite before you points of wisdom but you turn away from them and I admonish you with far reaching advice but you disperse away from it. I rouse you for jihad against the people of rebellion but before I come to the end of my speech, I see you disperse like the sons of Saba.[156] You return to your places and deceive one another by your counsel. I straighten you in the morning but you are back to me in the evening as curved as the back of a bow. The one who straightens has become weary while those to be straightened have become incorrigible.

O those whose bodies are present but wits are absent and whose wishes are scattered and their rulers are on trial. Your leader obeys Allah but you disobeyed him while the leader of the people of Syria disobeys Allah but they obey him. By Allah, I wish Mu`awiyah will exchange with me dinars for dirhams, so that he gives from me ten of you and gives me one from them.

people of Kufa! I have experienced in you three things and two others: you are deaf in spite of having ears, dumb in spite of speaking and blind in spite of having eyes. You are neither true supporters in combat nor dependable brothers in distress. Your hands may be soiled with earth. O examples of those camels whose herdsman has disappeared, if they are

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[156]The progeny of Saba' ibn Yashjub ibn Ya`rub ibn Qahtan is known as the tribe of Saba' [in English, Sheba]. When these people began to falsify prophets, to shake them, Allah sent a flood of water by which their gardens were submerged and they left their houses and property to settle down in different cities. This proverb arose out of this event and it is now applied wherever people so disperse that there be no hope of their joining together again.

collected together from one side they disperse from the other. By Allah, I see you in my imagination that if war becomes intense and action is in full swing you will run away from the son of Abu Talib like the woman who becomes naked in the front. I am certainly on clear guidance from my Master (Allah) and on the path of my Prophet (ص) and I am on the right path which I adhere to regularly.

About the Household of the Holy Prophet (ص):

Behold the people of the Prophet's family! Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they will never let you out of guidance and never throw you into destruction. If they sit down, you sit down and if they rise up you rise up. Do not go ahead of them, as you will thereby go astray and do not lag behind them as you will thereby be ruined.

I have seen the companions of the Prophet (ص) but I do not find anyone resembling them. They began the day with dust on the hair and face (in hardship of life) and passed the night in prostration and standing in prayers. Sometimes they put down their foreheads and sometimes their cheeks. With the recollection of their resurrection it seemed as though they stood on live coals. It seemed that in between their eyes there were signs like knees of goats, resulting from long prostrations. When Allah was mentioned their eyes flowed freely till their shirt collars were drenched. They trembled for fear of punishment and hope of reward as the tree trembles on the day of stormy wind.

Sermon 97

Oppressiveness of the Umayyads:

By Allah! They will continue like this till there will remain no unlawful act before Allah except that they will make it lawful, nor a pledge except that they will break it and till there will remain no house of bricks or of woolen tent but their oppression will enter it. Their bad dealings will make them wretched, till two groups of crying complainants will rise. One will cry for his religion and the other for this world and the help of one of you to one of them will be like the help of a slave to his master, namely when he is present he obeys him, but when the master is away he backbites him. The highest among you in distress will be he who bears best belief about Allah. If Allah grants you safety accept it and if you are put in trouble endure it because surely (good) result is for the God-fearing.

Sermon 98

About Abstinence from the World and Vicissitudes of Time:

We praise Allah for what has happened and seek His succor in our affairs for what is yet to happen and we beg Him for safety in the faith just as we beg Him for safety in our bodies.

O servants of Allah! I admonish you to keep away from this world which will (shortly) leave you even though you do not like its departure and which will make your bodies old even though you will like to keep them fresh. Your example and its example is like the travelers who travel some distance then as though they traverse it quickly or they aimed at a sign and reached it at once. How short is the distance to the aim if one heads towards it and reaches it. And how short is the stage of one who has only a day which he cannot exceed while a swift driver is driving him in this world till he departs from it.

So do not hanker after worldly honor and its pride and do not feel happy over its beauties and bounties nor wail over its damages and misfortune because its honor and pride will end while its beauty and bounty will perish and its damages and misfortunes will pass away. Every period in it has an end and every living being in it is to die. Is there not for you a warning in the relics of the predecessors and an eye opener and lesson in your forefathers, provided you understand?

Do you not see that your predecessors do not come back and the surviving followers do not remain? Do you not observe that the people of the world pass mornings and evenings in different conditions? Thus, (somewhere) the dead is wept for, someone is being condoled, someone is prostrate in distress, someone is inquiring about the sick, someone is passing his last breath, someone is hankering after the world while death is looking for him. Someone is forgetful but he is not forgotten (by death) and on the footsteps of the predecessors walk the survivors.

Beware! At the time of committing evil deeds remember the destroyer of joys, the spoiler of pleasures and the killer of desires (namely death). Seek assistance of Allah for fulfillment of His obligatory rights and for (thanking Him) for His countless bounties and obligations.

Sermon 99

About the Holy Prophet (ص) and his Descendants :

Praise be to Allah Who spreads His bounty throughout the creation and extends His hand of generosity among them. We praise Him in all His affairs and seek His assistance for fulfillment of His rights. We testify that there is no god except He and that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and Prophet (ص). He sent him to manifest His commands and speak about His remembrance. Consequently, he fulfilled it with trustworthiness and he passed away while on the right path.

He left among us the standard of right. Whoever goes further from it goes out of faith, whoever lags behind it is ruined. Whoever sticks to it will join (the right). Its guide is short of speech, slow of steps and quick when he rises. When you have bent your necks before him and pointed towards him with your fingers his death will occur and will take him away. They will live after him as long as Allah wills till Allah brings out for you one who will collect you together and fuse you after diffusion. Do not place expectation in one who does not[157] come forward and do not lose hope in one who is veiled because it is possible that one of the two feet of the veiled one may slip while the other may remain sticking, till both return to status and stick.

Beware! The example of the descendant of Muhammad (ص) is like that of stars in the sky. When one star sets another rises. So you are in a status that Allah's blessings on you have been perfected and He has shown you what you once wished for.

Sermon 100

About the Vicissitudes of Time :

He (Allah) is the First before every first and the Last after every last. His Firstness necessitates that there is no (other) first before Him and His Perpetuity necessitates that there is no other to last after Him. I do

[157]The implication is that if for the time being your expectations are not being fulfilled, you should not be disappointed. It is possible matters may improve, the impediments in the way of improvement may be removed and matters may be settled as you wish.

testify, both openly as well as secretly, with heart as well as with tongue, that there is no god but Allah.

O people! do not commit the crime of opposing me, do not be seduced into disobeying me and do not wink at each other with eyes when you hear me. By Allah, Who germinates the seed and blows the wind, whatever I convey to you is from the Prophet (ص). Neither the conveyor (of Allah's message, i.e. The Prophet [ص]) lied, nor the hearer misunderstood.

Well, it is as though I see a misguided man[158] who is shouting in Syria and has put his banners in the outskirts of Kufa. When his mouth will be fully opened, his recalcitrance will become intense and his steps on earth will become heavy (and tyrannical) then the disorder (so created) will cut the people with its teeth and war will rage with (all) its waves. Days will become severe and nights full of toil. So when the crops grow and stand on stalks, its foam shoots forth and its lightning shines, the banners of misguiding rebellion will fire up and shoot forth like darkening night and surging sea. This and how many other storms will rend Kufa and gales will sweep over it? Shortly, heads will clash with heads, the standing crop will be harvested and the harvest will be smashed.

Sermon 101

On the Same Subject: The Day of Judgement :

That Day will be such that Allah will collect on it the interiors and the posteriors, to stand in obedience for exaction of accounts and for award of recompense for deeds. Sweat will flow to their mouths like rains while the earth will be trembling under them. In the best condition among them will be he who has found a resting place for both his feet and an open place for his breath.

Part of the same sermon about future troubles (fitan):

The troubles are like a dark night. Horses will not stand for (facing) them nor will their banners turn back. They will approach in full reins and ready with saddles. Their leader will be driving them and the

[158]Some people have taken this to refer to Mu`awiyah, while others see it as a reference to `Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan.

rider will be exerting (them). The trouble-mongers are a people whose attacks are severe. Those who will fight them for the sake of Allah will be a people who are low in the estimation of the proud, unknown in the earth but well known on the sky. Woe to you O Basra, when an army of Allah's infliction will face you without (raising) their dust of cries! Your inhabitants will then face bloody death and a dire hunger.

Sermon 102

About Gluttony, Fear of Allah :

O people! Look at the world like those who abstain from it and turn away from it. By Allah, it will shortly turn out its inhabitants and cause grief to the happy and the safe. That which turns and goes away from it never returns and that which is likely to come about is not known or anticipated. Its joy is mingled with grief. Herein men's firmness inclines towards weakness and languidness. The majority of what pleases you here should not mislead you because that which will help you will be little.

Allah may shower His mercy on him who ponders and takes lesson thereby and when he takes lesson he achieves enlightenment. Whatever is present in this world will shortly not exist, while whatever is (perceived) to Exist in the Hereafter is already in existence. Every countable thing will pass away. Every anticipation should be taken to be coming up and everything that is to come up should be taken as just near.

Part of the Same Sermon on the Attributes of a Learned Person:

Learned is he who knows his worth. It is enough for a man to remain ignorant if he knows not his worth. Certainly, the most hated man with Allah is he whom Allah has left for his own self. He goes astray from the right path and moves without a guide. If he is called to the plantation of the Hereafter he is slow. As though what he is active for is obligatory upon him whereas in whatever he is slow was not required of him.

Part of the same sermon about future times:

There will be a time wherein only a sleeping (inactive) believer will be safe (such that) if he is present he is not recognized but if he is

absent he is not sought after. These are the lamps of guidance and banners of night journeys. They do not spread calumnies nor divulge secrets, nor slander. They are those for whom Allah will open the doors of His mercy and keeps off from them the hardships of His chastisement.

O people! Time will come when Islam will be capsized as a pot is capsized with all its contents. O people! Allah has protected you from that. He might be hard on you but He has not spared you from being put on trial. Allah the most Sublime of all speakers has said the following:

Verily in this are signs and We do only try (the people). (Holy Quran, 23: 30)

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "As regarding Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's words Akullu Mu'minin nuwamah (every sleeping believer), he implies thereby one who is talked of little and causes no evil. And the word "al-masayth" is the plural of "misyah". He is one who spreads trouble among people through evils and calumny. And the word al-madhayi is the plural of "midhya". He is one who upon hearing of an evil about some one spreads it and shouts about it. And al-budhur is the plural of badur. He is one who excels in foolishness and speaks rubbish.

Sermon 103

About the Condition of the People Before the Proclamation of Prophethood and the Prophet's Performance in Spreading His Message :

So now, certainly Allah deputed Muhammad (ص) as the Prophet (ص) while no one among the Arabs read the Book nor claimed Prophethood or revelation. He had to fight those who disobeyed him in the company with those who followed him, leading them towards their salvation and hastening with them lest death overtake them. When any weary person sighed or a distressed one stopped, he stood with him till he got him his desire, except the worst in whom there was no virtue at all. Eventually he showed them their goal and carried them to their places (of deliverance). Consequently their affairs moved on and their hand-mill began to rotate (i.e. a status gained strength), their spears got straightened.

By Allah, I was among their rear-guard till they turned back on their sides and were flocked in their rope. I never showed weakness or

lack of courage, nor did I betray or become languid. By Allah,I shall split the wrong till I extract right from its flanks.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: I have quoted a selected part of this sermon before, but since I have found in the narration that this part differs from the previous one, more or less, I deemed it necessary to quote it again here.

Sermon 104

In Praise of the Holy Prophet (ص) :

Then Allah deputed Muhammad (ص) as a witness, giver of good tidings and warner, the best in the universe as a child and the most chaste as a grown man, the purest of the purified in conduct and the most generous of those who are approached for generosity.

About the Ummayads:

This world did not appear sweet to you in its pleasures and you did not secure milk from its udders except after having met it when its nose rein was trailing and its leather girth was loose. For certain peoples its unlawful items were like bent branches (laden with fruit) while its unlawful items were far away, not available. By Allah, you will find liken a long shade until a fixed time. So the earth is with you without let or hindrance and your hands in it are extended while the hands of the leaders are held away from you. Your swords are hanging over them while their swords are held away from you.

Beware that for every blood (that is shed) there is an avenger and for every right there is a claimant. The avenger for our blood is like the judge for his own claim and it is Allah Who is such that if one seeks Him, then He does not disappoint him and one who runs away from Him, cannot escape Him. I swear by Allah, O Banū Umayyah! Soon you will see it (i.e. your possession, that is, power) in the hands of others and in the house of your enemy. Be informed that the best looking eye is that whose sight catches virtue and know that the best hearing ear is that which hears good advice and accepts it.

About the Functions of the Imams:

O people! secure light from the flame of lamps of the preacher who follows what he preaches and draw water from the spring which has been cleaned of dirt.

O servants of Allah, do not rely on your ignorance. Do not be obedient to your desires because he who stays at this place is like one who stays on the brink of a bank undermined by water carrying ruin on his back from one portion to the other and following his opinion which he changes (one after the other). He wants to adhere what cannot adhere and to bring together what cannot keep together. So fear Allah and do not place your complaints before him who cannot redress your grievance, nor undo with his opinion what has been made obligatory for you.

Certainly, there is no obligation on the Imam except what has been devolved on him from Allah, namely to convey warnings, to exert in good advice, to revive the Sunnah, to enforce penalties on those liable to them and to issue shares to the deserving. So hasten toward knowledge before its vegetation dries up and before you turn yourselves away from seeking knowledge from those who have it. Desist others from the unlawful and abstain from it yourself because you have been commanded to abstain (yourself) before abstaining (others).

Sermon 105

About Islam :

Praise be to Allah Who established Islam and made it easy for those who approach it and gave strength to its columns against any one who tries to overpower it. So Allah made it (a source of) peace for whoever clings to it, safety for whoever enters it, argument for whoever speaks about it, witness for whoever fights with its help, light for whoever seeks light from it, understanding for whoever provides it, sagacity for whoever exerts, a sign (of guidance) for whoever perceives, sight for whoever resolves, lesson for whoever seeks advice, salvation for whoever testifies, confidence for whoever trusts, pleasure for whoever entrusts and a shield for whoever endures.

It is the brightest of all paths and the clearest of all passages. It has dignified minarets, bright highways, burning lamps, prestigious fields of activity and high objectives. It has a collection of race horses. It is

approached eagerly. Its riders are honorable. A testimony (to Allah, Prophet (ص), etc.) is its way, good deeds are its minarets, death is in extremity, this world is its race-course. The Day of Judgement is its horses and Paradise is its point of approach.

Part of the same sermon About the Holy Prophet (ص):

The Prophet (ص) lit flames for the seeker and put bright signs for the impeded. So he is Your trustworthy trustee, Your witness on the Day of Judgement, Your deputy as a blessing and Your messenger of truth as mercy. May Allah distribute to him a share from Your Justice and award him multiples of good by Your bounty. May Allah heighten his construction over the construction of others, honor him when he comes to You, dignify his status before You, give him honorable status and award him glory and distinction and bring us out (on Day of Judgement) among his party, neither ashamed, nor repentant, nor deviators, nor pledge-breakers, nor strayers, nor misleading others, nor seduced.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "This sermon had already appeared earlier but we have repeated it here because of the difference between the two versions.

Part of the same sermon addressing his followers:

By the bounty of Allah over you, you have acquired a status where even your slave maids are honored, your neighbors are treated well. Even he over whom you enjoy no distinction or obligation honors you. Even those people fear you who had no apprehension of attack from you or any authority over you. You now see pledges of Allah being broken but do not feel enraged although you fret and frown on the breaking of traditions of your forefathers. Allah's matters have been coming back to you; but you have given your place to wrongdoers and thrown your responsibilities toward them. You have placed Allah's affairs in their hands. They act in doubts and tread in (fulfillment of) desires. By Allah, even if they disperse you under every star Allah will surely collect you on the day that will be worst for them.

Sermon 106

Delivered During One of the Fighting Days of the Battle of Siffīn:

I have seen your flight and your dispersal from the lines. You were surrounded by rude and low people and bedouins of Syria, although you are the chiefs of Arabs and the summit of distinction and you possess dignity as that of the high nose and the big hump of a camel. The sigh of my bosom can subside only when I eventually see you surrounding them as they surrounded you and see you dislodging them from their status as they dislodged you, killing them with arrows and striking them with spears so that their forward rows might fall on the rear ones just like the thirsty camels who have been turned away from their place of drink and removed from their water-points.

Sermon 107

One of the Sermons about the Vicissitudes of Time :

Praise be to Allah Who is Manifest before His creation because of themselves. Who is apparent to their hearts because of clear proof; Who created without meditating, since meditating does not befit except one who has thinking organs while He has no thinking organ in Himself. His knowledge has split forth the inside of unknown secrets and covered the bottom of deep beliefs.

Part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet (ص):

Allah chose him from the lineal tree of prophets, from the flame of light, from the forehead of greatness, from the best part of the valley of al-Bat'ha', from the lamps for darkness and from the sources of wisdom.

Part of the same sermon:

The Prophet (ص) was like a roaming physician who has readied his ointments and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears and dumb tongues. He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence and places of perplexity.

Remonstrating with the Muslims:

They (people) did not take light from the lights of his wisdom nor did they produce flame from the flint of sparkling knowledge. So in this matter they are like grazing cattle and hard stones. Nevertheless hidden things have appeared for those who perceive. The face of right has

become clear for the wanderer, the approaching moment has raised the veil from its face and signs have appeared for those who search for them.

What is the matter with me! I see that you are just bodies without spirits and spirits without bodies, devotees without good, traders without profits, wakeful but sleeping, present but unseen, seeing but blind, hearing but deaf and speaking but dumb.

I notice that misguidance has stood on its center and spread (all around) through its off-shoots. It weighs you with its weights and confuses you with its measures. Its leader is an out-cast from the community. He persists on misguidance. So on that day none from among you will remain except as the sediment in a cooking pot or the dust left after dusting a bundle. It will scrape you as leather is scraped and trample you as harvest is trampled and pick out the believer as a bird picks out a big grain from the thin grain.

Where are these ways taking you, gloom misleading you and falsehoods deceiving you? Whence are you brought and where are you driven? For every period there is a written document and everyone who is absent has to return. So listen to your godly leader and keep your hearts present. If he speaks to you be wakeful. The forerunner must speak truth to his people, should keep his wits together and maintain presence of mind. He has clarified to you the matter as the stitch hole is cleared and scraped it as the gum is scraped (from the twigs).

Nevertheless, now the wrong has set itself on its places and ignorance has ridden on its riding beasts. Unruliness has increased while the call for virtue is suppressed. Wrong has pounced in time like a devouring carnivore and shouts like a camel after remaining silent. People have become brothers over ill-doings, have forsaken the essential unity of the religion but have instead, united in speaking lies and bear mutual hatreds in the matter of truth.

When such is the case, the son will be a source of anger (instead of coolness of the eye to parents) and rain the cause of heat, the wicked will abound and the virtuous will diminish. The people of this time will be wolves, its rulers beasts, the middle class men gluttons and the poor (almost) dead. Truth will go down, falsehood will overflow, affection will be claimed with tongues but people will be quarrelsome at heart. Adultery will be the key to lineage while chastity will be rare and Islam will be worn unturned like (dead) skin.

Sermon 108

About the Might of Allah :

Everything submits to Him and everything exists by Him. He is the satisfaction of the poor, the dignity of the low, the energy for the weak and shelter for the oppressed. Whoever speaks, He hears his speaking and whoever keeps quiet, He knows his secret. On Him is the livelihood of everyone who lives and whoever dies returns to Him.

(O Allah!) The eyes have not seen You, so as to be aware of You, but You were before the describers of Your creation. You did not create the creation on account of loneliness, nor did You make them work for gain. He whom You catches cannot go farther than You and he whom You holds cannot escape You. He who disobeys You does not decrease Your authority and he who obeys You does not add to Your Might. He who disagrees with Your judgement cannot turn it and he who turns away from Your command cannot do without You. Every secret before You is open and for You every absent is present.

You are everlasting, there is no end to You. You are the highest aim, there is no escape from You, You are the promised (point of return) from which there is no deliverance except towards You. In Your hand is the forelock of every creature and to You is the return of every living being. Glory to You! How great is Your creation that we see, but how small is this greatness by the side of Your Might. How awe-striking is Your realm that we notice, but how humble is this against what is hidden from us out of Your authority. How extensive are Your bounties in this world, but how small are they against the bounties of the next world.

Part of the Same Sermon about the Angels:

You (O Allah) made angels reside in Your skies and placed them high above from Your earth. They have the most knowledge about You and Your whole creation, the most fearing from You and the nearest to You. They never stayed in loins nor were retained in wombs. They were not created Afrom mean water (semen) (Holy Quran, 32: 8; 77: 20). They were not dispersed by vicissitudes of time. They are on their places (distinct) from You and in their positions near You. Their desires are concentrated in You. Their worship for You is much. Their neglect from Your command is little. If they witness what remains hidden about You they will regard their deeds as very little, they will criticize themselves

and will realize that they did not worship You according to Your right for being worshipped and did not obey You as You has the right for being obeyed.

About the Bounties and Guidance of Allah and Those Who Are Ungrateful:

Glorified are You, O Creator, the One worshipped by all, on account of Your good trials of Your creatures. You created a house (the Paradise) and provided in it for feasting, drinks, foods, spouses, servants, places, streams, plantations and fruits. Then You sent a messenger to invite towards it. But the people did not respond to the caller and did not feel persuaded to what You persuaded them nor showed eagerness towards what You desired them to eagerly feel. They jumped on the carcass (of this world), earned shame by eating it and became united in loving it.

When one loves a thing it blinds him and sickens his heart. Then he sees but with a diseased eye, hears but with unhearing ears. Desires have cut asunder his wit and the world has made his heart dead, while his mind is all longing for it. Consequently, he is a slave of it and of everyone who has any share in it. Wherever it turns, he turns towards it and wherever it proceeds, he proceeds towards it. He is not desisted by any disaster from Allah, nor takes admonition from any preacher. He sees those who have been caught in neglect whence there is neither rescission nor reversion (repentance).

About Death:

Whatever they were ignoring has befallen them, separation from this world, from which they took themselves safe, has come to them and they have reached that in the Hereafter which they had been promised. Whatever has befallen them cannot be described. Pangs of death and grief for losing (this world) have surrounded them. Consequently their limbs become languid and their complexion changes. Then death increases its struggle over them.

In some it stands in between him and his power of speaking although he lies among his people, looking with eyes, hearing with his ears, with full wits and intelligence. He then thinks over how he wasted his life and in what (activities) he passed his time. He recalls the wealth he collected when he had blinded himself in seeking it and acquired it from fair and foul sources. Now the consequences of collecting it have

overtaken him. He gets ready to leave it. It will remain for those who are behind him. They will enjoy it and benefit by it.

It will be an easy acquisition for others but a burden on his back and the man cannot get rid of it. He will thereupon, bite his hands with his teeth out of shame for what was disclosed to him about his affairs at the time of his death. He will dislike what he coveted during the days of his life and he will wish that he who envied him on account of it and felt jealous over him for it should have amassed it instead of he himself.

Death will go on affecting his body till his ears too will behave like his tongue (and lose functioning). So he will lie among his people, neither speaking with his tongue or hearing with his ears. He will be rotating his glance over their faces, watching the movements of their tongues, but not hearing their speaking. Then death will increase its sway over him and his sight will be taken by death as the ears had been taken and the spirit will depart from his body. He will then become a carcass among his own people. They will feel loneliness from him and get away from him. He will not join a mourner or respond to a caller. Then they will carry him to a small place in the ground and deliver him in it to (face) his deeds. They will abandon visiting him.

About the Day of Judgement:

Until whatever is written as ordained approaches its and the affairs complete their destined limits, the posteriors join the anteriors and whatever Allah wills takes place in the shape of resurrection of His creation. Then He will convulse the sky and split it. He will quake the earth and shake it. He will root out the mountains and scatter them. They will crush each other out of awe of His Glory and fear of His Dignity.

He will take out everyone who is in it. He will refresh them after they had been worn out and collect them after they had been separated. Then He will set them apart for questioning about the hidden deeds and secret acts. He will then divide them into two groups, rewarding one and punishing the other. As regarding the obedient people He will reward them with His nearness and will keep them forever in His house from where those who settle the rein do not move out. Their status will not undergo change, fear will not overtake them, ailments will not befall them, dangers will not affect them and journey will not force them (from place to place).

As for people of sins, He will settle them in the worst place, will bind their hands with the necks, bind the forelocks with feet and will clothe them in shirts of tar and dresses cut out of flames. They will be in punishment whose heat will be severe, the door will be closed on the inmates - in fire which is full of shouts and cries and rising flames and fearful voices. Its inmate does not move out of it, its prisoner cannot be released by ransom and its shackles cannot be cut. There is no fixed age for this house so that it might perish, nor period for its life that might pass away.

Part of the Same Sermon about the Holy Prophet (ص):

He treated this world disdainfully and regarded it low. He held it contemptible and hated it. He realized that Allah kept it away from him with intention and spread it out for others by way of contempt. Therefore, he remained away from it by his heart, banished its recollection from his mind and wished that its attraction should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not acquire any clothing from it, or hope for staying in it. He conveyed from Allah the pleas (against committing sins), counseled his people as a warner (against the Divine chastisement) and he called (people) towards Paradise as a conveyor of good tidings.

About the Descendants of the Holy Prophet (ص):

We are the tree of Prophethood, staying place of (the Divine) Message, descending place of angels, mines of knowledge and the sources of wisdom. Our supporter and lover awaits mercy while our enemy and he who hates us awaits wrath.

Sermon 109

About Islam :

The best means by which seekers of nearness to Allāh, the Glorified One, the Exalted, seek nearness, is the belief in Him and His Prophet (ص), fighting in His cause, for it is the high pinnacle of Islam and (to believe) in kalimatul-ikhlas (the expression of the Divine purification). It is a just nature and the establishment of prayer for it is (the basis of) community. The payment of zakat for it is a compulsory obligation, fasting for the month of Ramadan for it is the shield against chastisement. The performance of hajj to the House of Allah (i.e. The Ka`ba) and its `umrah (other than annual visit) for these two acts banish poverty and

wash away sins. Regard for kinship for it increases wealth and length of life. Giving alms secretly for it covers shortcomings, giving alms openly for it protects against a bad death and extending benefits (to people) for it saves from positions of disgrace.

About the Holy Quran and the Sunnah:

Go ahead with the remembrance of Allah for it is the best remembrance and long for that which He has promised to the pious, for His promise is the most true promise. Tread the course of the Prophet (ص) for it is the most distinguished course. Follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (ص) for it is the most right of all behaviors. Learn the Holy Quran for it is the fairest of discourses and understand it thoroughly for it is the best blossoming of hearts. Seek cure with its light for it is the cure for hearts. Recite it beautifully for it is the most beautiful narration. Certainly, a scholar who acts not according to his knowledge is like the off-headed ignorant who does not find relief from his ignorance; but on the learned the plea of Allah is greater and grief more incumbent and he is more blameworthy before Allah.

Sermon 110

Cautioning about this World :

So now, certainly I frighten you from this world for it is sweet and green, surrounded by lusts and liked for its immediate enjoyments. It excites wonder with small things, is ornamented with (false) hopes and decorated with deception. Its rejoicing does not last and its afflictions cannot be avoided. It is deceitful, harmful, changing, perishable, exhaustible, liable to destruction, gnawing and destructive. When it reaches the extremity of desires of those who incline towards it and feel happy with it, the status is just what Allah, the most Glorified One, says (in the Holy Quran):

... like water which We send down from the heavens and the herbage of the earth mingles with it, then it becomes dry stubble which the winds scatter; for Allah over all things has power. (Holy Quran, 18: 45)

Nobody rejoices about this world except that tears come to him after it, and no one enjoys its comforts except that he has to face hardships in thereafter. No one receives the light rain of ease in it but the

heavy rain of distress pours upon him. It is worthy of this world that in the morning it supports a man but in the evening it does not recognize him. If one side of it is sweet and pleasant the other side is bitter and distressing.

No one secures enjoyment from its freshness but he has to face hardship from its calamities. No one will pass the evening under the wing of safety but that his morning will be under the feathers of the wing-tip of fear. It is deceitful and all that is the rein is deception. It is perishable and all that is on it is to perish. There is no good in its provisions except in piety. Whoever takes little from it collects much of what will give him safety, while one who takes much from it takes much of what will ruin him. He will shortly depart from his collection. How many people relied on it but it distressed them; (how many) felt peaceful with it but it made them tumble; how many were prestigious but it made them low and how many were proud but it made them disgraceful.

Its authority is changing. Its life is dirty. Its sweet water is bitter. Its sweetness is like myrrh. Its food are poisons. Its means are weak. The living in it are exposed to death; the healthy in it are exposed to disease. Its realm is (liable to be) snatched away. The strong in it are (liable to be) defeated and the rich are (liable to be) afflicted with misfortune. The neighbor in it is (liable to be) plundered.

Are you not (residing) in the houses of those before you, who were of longer ages, better traces, had bigger desires, were more in numbers and had greater armies? How they devoted themselves to the world and how they showed preference to it! then they left it without any provision that could convey them through, or the back (of a beast for riding) to carry them.

Did you get the news that the world was ever generous enough to present ransom for them, or gave them any support or afforded them good company? It rather inflicted them with troubles, made them languid with calamities, assaulted them with catastrophes, threw them down on their noses, trampled them under hoofs and helped the vicissitudes of time against them. You have observed its strangeness towards those who went near it, acquired it and appropriated it, till they departed from it for good. Did it give them any provision other than starvation, or make them stay in other than narrow places, or give them light other than gloom, or give them in the end anything other than repentance? Is this what you ask for so much or remain satisfied with, or towards which you feel greedy? How bad is this abode for him that he did not suspect it (to be so) and did not entertain fear from it?

You should know, as you do know, that you have to leave it and depart from it. While in it, take lesson from those Awho proclaimed “who is more powerful than us?’ (Holy Quran, 41: 15), but they were carried to their graves, though not as riders. They were then made to stay in the graves, but not as guests. Graves were made for them from the surface of the ground. Their shrouds were made from earth. Old bones were made their neighbor. They are neighbors who do not answer a caller nor ward off trouble, nor pay heed to a mourner.

If they get rain they do not feel happy and if they face famine they do not get disappointed. They are together but each one apart. They are close together but do not see each other. They are near but do not meet. They are enduring and have no hatred. They are ignorant and their malice has died away. There is no fear of trouble from them and no hope of their warding off (troubles). They have exchanged the back (surface) of the earth with its stomach (interior), vastness with narrowness, family with loneliness and light with darkness. They have come to it (this world) as they had left it with bare feet and naked bodies. They departed from it with their acts towards the continuing life and everlasting house as Allah has said the following:

... As we caused the first creation, so will We cause its return. (It is) a promise binding Us, verily We were doing it. (Holy Quran, 21: 104)

Sermon 111

About the Angel of Death and the Soul Taking Leave :

Do you feel when the Angel of Death enters a house, or do you see him when he calls the life out from someone? How does he take out the life of an embryo in the womb of his mother? Does he reach it through any part of her body or does the spirit respond to his call with the permission of Allah? Or does he stay with him in the mother’s inside? How can he who is unable to describe a creature like this, describe Allah?

Sermon 112

About the World and its People :

I warn you of the world for it is the abode of the unsteady. It is not a house for foraging. It has decorated itself with deception and deceives with its decoration. It is a house which is low before Allah. So

He has mixed its lawful with its unlawful, its good with its evil, its life with its death and its sweetness with its bitterness. Allah has not kept it clear for His lovers, nor has He been niggardly with it towards His foes. Its good is sparing. Its evil is ready at hand. Its collection will dwindle away. Its authority will be snatched away. Its habitation will face desolation. What is the good of a house which falls down like fallen construction or what (Existent) good is there in an age which expires as the provision exhausts, or of time which passes like walking?

Include whatever Allah has made obligatory on you in your demands. Ask from Him fulfillment of what He has asked you to do. Make your ears hear the call of death before you are called by death. Surely the hearts of the abstemious weep in this world even though they may(apparently) laugh and their grief increases even though they appear happy. Their hatred for themselves is much even though they may be envied for the subsistence they are allowed. Remembrance of death has disappeared from your hearts while false hopes are present in you. So this world has mastered you more than the next world and the immediate end (of this world) has removed you away from the remote one (of the next life). You are brethren in the religion of Allah. Dirty natures and bad conscience have caused separation (disunity) among you. As a consequence you do not bear one another's burdens, nor do you advise each other, nor spend on each other, nor do you love one another.

What is your condition? You feel satisfied with what little you have secured from this world while much of the next world of which you have been deprived does not grieve you. The little of this world which you lose pains you so much so that it becomes apparent in your faces and in the lack of your endurance over whatever is taken away from you; as though this world is your permanent abode and as though its wealth will stay with you for good. Nothing prevents anyone among you to disclose to his comrade the shortcomings he is afraid of, except the fear that the comrade will also disclose to him similar defects. You have been deceived together on leaving the next world and loving this world. Your religion has become just licking with the tongue. It is like the work of one who has finished his job and secured satisfaction of his master.

Sermon 113

About Abstemiousness, Fear of Allah and Importance of Providing for the next Life :

Praised be to the One Who follows praise with bounty and bounty with gratefulness. We praise Him for His bounties as for His trails. We seek His help against these hearts which are slow to obey what they have been commended but quick towards what they have been desisted from. We seek His forgiveness from that which His knowledge covers and His document preserves knowledge which does not leave anything and document which does not omit anything. We believe in Him like the belief of one who has seen the unknown and has attained the promised rewards - belief, the purity whereof keeps off from belief in partners of Allah and whose conviction removes doubt.

We testify that there is no god but Allah, the One, Who has no partner for Him and that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and His Prophet (ص), Allah may bless him and his descendants. These two testimonials intensify the utterance and raise the act. The scale wherein they will be placed will not be light while the scale from which they are removed will not become heavy.

Enjoining People to Piety:

O servants of Allah! I admonish you to fear Allah which is the provision (for next world) and with it is (your) return. The provision will take you (to your destination) and the return will be successful. The best one, who is able to make people listen has called toward it and the best listener has listened to it. So the caller has proclaimed and the listener has listened and preserved.

O creations of Allah! Certainly fear of Allah has saved the lovers of Allah from unlawful items and gave His dread to their hearts till their nights are passed in wakefulness and their days in thirst. So they achieve comfort through trouble and copious watering through thirst. They regarded death to be near and, therefore, hastened towards (good) actions. They rejected their desires and so they kept death in their sight.

Then, this world is a place of destruction, tribulations, changes and lessons. As for destruction, the time has its bow pressed (to readiness) and its dart does not go amiss, its wound does not heal; it afflicts the living with death, the healthy with ailment and the safe with distress. It is an eater who is not satisfied and a drinker whose thirst is never quenched. As for tribulation, a man collects what he does not eat and builds wherein he does not live. Then he goes out to Allah without carrying the wealth or shifting the building.

As for its changes, you see a pitiable man becoming enviable and an enviable man becoming pitiable. This is so because the wealth has gone and misfortune has come to him. As for its lessons, a man reaches near (realization of) his desires when (suddenly) the approach of his death cuts them; then neither the desire is achieved nor the one who desires is spared. Glory to Allah, how deceitful are its pleasures, how thirst-rousing its quenching and how sunny its shade. That which approaches (i.e. death) cannot be sent back, he who goes away does not return. Glory to Allah, how near is the living to the dead because he will meet him soon and how far is the dead from the living because he has gone away from him.

Certainly nothing is viler than evil except its punishment and nothing is better than good except its reward. In this world everything that is heard is better than what is seen, while of everything of the next world that is seen is better than what is heard. So you should satisfy yourself by hearing rather than seeing and by thenews of the unknown. You should know that what is little in this world but much in the next is better than what is much in this world but little in the next. In how many cases little is profitable while much causes loss.

Certainly that which you have been commanded to do is wider than what you have been refrained from and what has been made lawful for you is more than what has been prohibited. Then give up what is less for what is much and what is limited for what is vast. Allah has guaranteed your livelihood and has commanded you to act. Therefore, the pursuit of that which has been guaranteed to you should not get preference over that whose performance has been enjoined upon you.

But by Allah, most certainly the status is that doubt has overtaken and certainty has been shattered and it seems as if what has been guaranteed to you is obligatory on you and what was made obligatory on you has been taken away from you. So, hasten towards (good) actions and dread the suddenness of death because the return of age cannot be hoped for tomorrow, as the return of livelihood can be hoped. Whatever is missed from livelihood today may be hoped tomorrow with increase, but whatever is lost from the age yesterday, its return cannot be expected today. Hope can be only for that which is to come, while about that which is passed there is only disappointment. So Afear Allah as He ought to be feared and do not die until you are (true) Muslim (Holy Quran, 3: 102).

Sermon 114

Praying for Rain :

O Lord! Surely our mountains have dried up and our earth has become dusty. Our cattle are thirsty and are bewildered in their enclosures. They are moaning like the moaning of mothers for their (dead) sons. They are tired of going to their meadows and longing for their watering places. O Lord! have mercy on the groan of the groaning and yearn of the yearning. O Lord! have mercy on their bewilderment and their passages and their groaning in their yards.

Lord! We have come out to You when the years of drought have crowded over us like (a herd of) thin camels and rain clouds have abandoned us. You are the hope for the afflicted and succor for the seeker. We call You when the people have lost hope, when cloud have been denied and cattle have died; do not seize us for our deeds and do not catch us for our sins. Spread Your mercy over us through raining clouds, rain fed blossoming, amazing vegetation and heavy downpours with which all that was dead regains life and all that was lost returns.

Lord! Give rain from You which should be life-giving, satisfying, thorough, widely scattered, pure, blissful, plentiful and invigorating. Its vegetation should be exuberant and its branches full of fruits and its green leaves. With it You invigorates the weak among Your creatures and brings back to life the dead among Your cities.

Lord! Give rain from You with which our highlands get covered with green herbage, streams get flowing, our slopes grow green, our fruits thrive, our cattle prosper, our far flung areas get watered and our dry areas get its benefit, with Your vast blessing and immeasurable grant on Your distressed universe and Your untamed beasts. And pour upon us rain which is drenching, continuous and heavy; wherein one cycle of rain clashes with the other and one rain drop pushes another (into a continuous chain). Its lightning should not be deceptive, its cheek not rainless, its white clouds not scattered and rain not light, so that the famine-stricken thrive with its abundant herbage and the drought stricken come to life with its bliss. Certainly, You pours down rain after the people lose hopes and spreads Your mercy, since You are the Guardian, the praiseworthy.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “The wonderful expressions of this sermon are: Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s words insahat jibaluna means

the mountains cracked on account of drought. It is said that insaha thawbah when it is torn. It is also said that insaha'n-nabtu or saba or sawwaha when vegetation withers and dries up."

His words wa hamat dawabbuna means became thirsty, as huyam means thirst.

His words hadabiru's-sinin are the plural of hidbar. It means: The camel whom treading has thinned. So Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) likened with such or camel the year in which drought had occurred. The Arab poet Dhu ar-Rumma has said the following:

These thin camels remain in their places, facing hardships and move only when we take them to some dry area.

Notice his words wa la qaza'in rababuha. Here, al-qaza means small pieces of cloud scattered all around.

His words wa la shaffanin dhihabuha stand for wa la dhata shaffanin dhihabuha. Ash-shaffan means the cold wind and adh-dhihab means light rain. He omitted the world dhata from here because of the listener's knowledge of it.

Sermon 115

About Troubles Which Will Arise and the Day of Judgement :

Allah deputed him (the Prophet [ص]) as a caller towards Truth and a witness over the creatures. The Prophet (ص) conveyed the messages of Allah without being lazy and without any short-coming and he fought His enemies in the cause of Allah without being languid and without pleading excuses. He is the foremost of all who practice piety and the power of perception of all those who achieve guidance.

Part of the same Sermon, Complaining about His Men:

If you know what I know of the unknown that is kept wrapped up from you certainly you will have gone out into the open weeping over your deeds and beating yourselves in grief. You will have abandoned your properties without any guard for it or any substitute over it. Everyone will then have cared for his own self without paying attention to anyone else. But you have forgotten what was recalled to you and felt safe from what

you had been warned. Consequently, your ideas went astray and your affairs were dispersed.

I do wish that Allah may cause separation between you and me and give me those who have a better knowledge of what is right than you to be with me. By Allah! Such are people of blissful ideas, enduring wisdom and true speech. They keep aloof from rebellion. They trod forward on the path (of Allah) and ran on the high road. Consequently, they achieved the everlasting next life and honors of ease.

Beware! By Allah! A tall lad of a swinging gait from Banu Thaqif will be placed over you. He will eat away your vegetation and melt your fat. So, O Aba Wadhahah, is that all?

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Al-Wadhahah means al-khunfusa (dung-beetle). In this sentence, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has referred to al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi who had an incident with al-Khunfusa, which needs not be related here.[159]

Sermon 116

Rebuking Misers :

You spend no wealth in the cause of the One Who gave it to you, nor do you risk your lives for the sake of the One Who created such lives. You enjoy honor through Allah among His creatures, but you do not honor Allah among His creatures. You should derive lessons from occupying the places of those who were before you and from the departure of your nearest brothers.

Sermon 117

In Praise Of His Faithful Companions :

[159]The detail of this incident is that one day al-Hajjaj stood up for saying prayers when al-khunfusa advanced towards him. Al-Hajjaj held out his hand to stop him but he bit him whereby his hand got swollen and eventually he died of it. Ibn Abul-Hadad has written that al-Wadhahah means the dung that remains sticking to the tail of an animal and this surname is intended to disgrace him.

You are supporters of Truth and brethren in faith. You are the shield on the day of tribulation and (my) trustees among the rest of the people. With your support I strike the runner away and hope for the obedience of him who advances forward. Therefore, extend to me support which is free from deceit and pure from doubt because, by Allah, I am the most preferable of all for the people.

Sermon 118

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) collected the people and exhorted them[1] to jihad but they observed a long silence. Then he said the following: "What is the matter with you. Have you lost your wits?! A group of them replied: "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! If you go forth we shall be with you, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

What has happened to you?! You may not be guided aright or shown the right path. Should I, under such circumstances, go forth?! In fact, at this time one of the brave and the valorous among you whom I select should go out. It does not suit me to leave the army, the city, the public treasury, the land revenue, the dispensation of justice among Muslims and looking after the demands of the claimants and to follow one contingent after the other moving here and there like featherless arrow moving in the quiver.

I am the axis of the mill. It rotates on me while I remain in my status. As soon as I leave, the center of its rotation will be disturbed and its lower stone will also be disturbed. By Allah, this is very bad advice. By Allah! If I had not been hoping for martyrdom by my meeting with the enemy, and my meeting with them has been ordained, I will have secured my carrier and went away from you and will not have sought you so long as the north and South differed.

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[160]When after the Battle of Siffin, Mu`awiyah's forces began to attack various places in Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's area, he asked the Iraqis to check them but they declined on the plea that they will follow him if he himself came forward. Thereupon, he delivered this sermon and clarified his limitations, that if he himself went out it was impossible to run the affairs of the state and that the enemy's attacks had already started on all sides. In these circumstances it was against politics to keep the center unguarded. But what could be hoped from those who changed the victory at Siffīn into defeat and opened the door for these attacks.

There is no benefit in the majority of your numbers because of a lack of unity of your hearts. I have put you on the clear path whereon no one will perish except who perishes by himself. He who sticks to it will achieve Paradise and he who deviates goes to Hell.

Sermon 119

About The Greatness Of Ahl Al-Bayt (ع) And The Importance Of The Laws Of Islam :

By Allah! I have knowledge of the conveyance of messages, fulfillment of promises and of entire expressions. We the people of the house (Ahl al-Bayt [ع]) possess the doors of wisdom and light of governance. Beware that the paths of religion are one and its highways are straight. He who follows them achieves (the aim) and secures (the objective). And he who stood away from it went astray and incurred repentance.

Do act for the day for which provisions are stored and when the intentions will be tested. If a person's own intelligence which is present with him does not help him, the wits (of others) which are remote from him are more unhelpful and those which are away from him more useless. Dread the fire whose flame is severe, whose hollow is deep, whose outfit is iron and whose drink is bloody puss. Beware! The good name of a man[161] retained by Allah, the Sublime, among the people is better than wealth inherited by those who will not praise him.

A Persian couplet says the following:

Happy is he who is remembered well after himself, For nothing, save the name, remains after the man is dead.

[161]If a person gives away something in his life-time then the recipient feels obliged to him. But if wealth is extracted by force then the extractor does not feel himself under his obligation, nor does he praise it. The same is the case of one who dies. His successors think that whatever he had left behind was their right and they should have received it. In this there is no obligation of his to be acknowledged. But if he had done some good act with this very wealth his name will have remained behind him and people will have praised him also.

Sermon 120

A man from among the companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib stood up and said, "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! You first stopped us from the arbitration, then you gave order for it. We do not know which of the two was more appropriate?"Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) struck one hand over the other and said the following :

Such is the reward of one who breaks a pledge. By Allah! When I gave you my orders (namely) to abide by arbitration I had led you to an undesirable thing (namely war) in which Allah had ordained good. If you had been steadfast I will have guided you, if you had been bent I will have straightened you and if you had refused I will have rectified you. This was the surest way. But with whom and through whom? I wanted my treatment from you but you proved to be my disease, like the one who extracts a thorn with another thorn when he knows that the thorn bends toward itself.

Lord! The physicians have despaired of this fatal ailment and water-drawers have become tired with the rope of this well. Where[162] are those who were invited to Islam and they accepted it? they read the Holy Quran and decided according to it. They were exhorted to fight and they

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[162]Although all those who fought under the banner of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) were called Shi`as of Ali, yet only those who had tears in their eyes, paleness on their faces, the Quranic verses on their tongues, zeal of religion in their hearts, steadfastness in their feet, determination and courage in their spirits and patience and endurance in their minds could in true sense be called Shi`as of Ali. These were the people in whose separation Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's feelings were coming out in the shape of sighs through the breath, while the flames of the fire of separation were consuming his heart and spirit. These were the people who leapt towards death like mad men and did not feel happy if they survived. Rather, their heart's slogan was as the Persian hemistich says the following: "We are ashamed why we have remained alive."He who has even a slight brilliance of these qualities can alone be called the follower of the Descendants of the Prophet (ص) of the Shi`a of Ali; otherwise, it will be a word which has lost its meaning and been bereft of its dignity through misuse. Thus tradition has it that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saw a group of men at his door and inquired from Qanbar who they were and he answered they were his Shi`as. On hearing this Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had a frown on his forehead and said, "Why are they called Shi`as? they have no sign of Shi`as. Thereupon, Qanbar inquired as to what were the signs of Shi`as and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied: "Their bellies are thin through hunger, their lips dry through thirst and their eyes bleared through weeping."

leapt (toward it) as she-camels leap towards their young. They took their swords out of the sheaths and went out into the world in groups and rows. Some of them perished and some survived. The good news of survival does not please them nor do they get condoled about the dead. Their eyes have turned white with weeping. Their bellies are emaciated because of fasting. Their lips are dry because of (constant) praying. Their color is pale because of wakefulness. Their faces bear the dust of God-fearing. These are my comrades who have departed. We should be justified if we feel eager for them and bite our hands in their separation.

Certainly, Satan has made his ways easy for you and wants to unfasten the knots of religion one by one and to cause division among you in place of unity. Keep away from his evil ideas and enchantments and accept good advice of one who offers it to you and preserve it in your minds.

Sermon 121

When the Kharijites Persisted in Their Rejecting the Arbitration, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Went to Their Camp and Addressed Them Thus:

Were all of you with us in Sifiīn? they replied that some of them were but some of them were not. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

Then you divide yourself into two groups. One of those who were in Siffin and other of those who were not present the re, so that I may address each as I see suitable.

Then the Imam (ع) shouted the following to the people:

Stop talking and keep quiet to listen to what I say. Turn your hearts to me. Whomever we ask for testimony, he should give it according to his knowledge about it.

Then he conversed with them in length. During the conversation, he said the following:

When they raised the Holy Quran by way of deceit, craft, artifice and cheating, did you not say that they are our brothers and comrades in accepting Islam? They want us to cease fighting and ask for protection

through the Book of Allah, the Glorified. Our opinion is to agree with them and to end their troubles. Then I said to you, In this affair, the outer side is Faith but the inner side is enmity. Its beginning is pity and the end is repentance. Consequently you should stick to your status and remain steadfast on your path. You should press your teeth (to put all your might) in jihad and should not pay heed to the shouts of one who shouts.[163] If he is answered, he will mislead, but if he is left (answered), he will be disgraced.

But when this thing (arbitration) was done I found that you agreed to it. By Allah, if I had refused it, it will not have been obligatory on me. Nor will Allah have laid its sin on me. And by Allah, not that I have accepted it, I alone am the rightful person who should be followed, for certainly the Holy Quran is with me. I have never forsaken it since I adopted its company. We have been with the Prophet (ص) in battles wherein those killed were fathers, sons, brothers and relations of one another. Nevertheless, every trouble and hardship just increased us in our belief, in our treading on the right path, in submission to (the Divine) command and in endurance of the pain of wounds.

We now had to fight our brethren in Islam because of entry into Islam of misguidance, crookedness, doubts and (wrong) interpretation. However, if we find any way by which Allah may collect us together in our disorder and by which we may come near each other in whatever common remains between us we will accept it and will give up everything else.

Ibn Abul-Hadid writes that this sermon comprises three parts which do not fit together because Sayyid ar-Radi selected some parts of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's sermons and did not record other parts as a result of which the continuity of utterance was not maintained. Thus, one part ends at "If he is left unanswered, he will be disgraced", the other at "And endurance at the pain of wound" and the third runs till the end of the sermon.

Sermon 122

Address of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) to His Followers on the Battlefield of Siffin About Providing a Moral Support For the Weak and the Low-spirited During the Fighting :

[163]This is a reference to either Mu`awiyah or Amr ibn al-As.

Whoever among you feels spiritedness of heart during the action and finds any of his comrades feeling disheartened should ward off (the enemies) from him just as he will do from himself because of the superiority he enjoys over the other, for if Allah had willed He will have made the former also like him. Certainly death is a quick seeker. Neither does the steadfast escape it nor can the one who runs away defy it. The best death is to be killed. By Allah in Whose hand (power) lies the life of the son of Abu Talib, certainly a thousand strikes of the sword on me are easier to me than a death in bed which is not in obedience to Allah.

Part of the same sermon:

It is as if I see you uttering voices like the rustling sound of lizards! You do not seek your own claims nor do you defend against oppression. You have been let free on the path. He who rushes (into the battle) achieves salvation, while he who lags behind, hesitating, gets destruction.

Sermon 123

Exhorting His Followers to Fight :

Put the armored man forward and keep the unarmored one behind. Grit your teeth because this will make the swords skip off the skull and dodge on the sides of the spears for it changes the direction of their blades. Close the eyes because it strengthens the spirit and gives peace to the heart. Kill the voices because this will keep off spiritlessness.

Do not let your banner bend, nor leave it alone. Do not give it to anyone except the brave and the defenders of honor among you because they alone endure the befalling of troubles; they surround the banners and encircle them on both sides, their rear and their front. They do not separate from them lest they give them (to the enemy). They do not go ahead of them lest they leave them alone. Everyone should deal with his adversary and also help his comrade by his own life and should not leave the adversary to his comrade lest both his own adversary and his comrade join against him.

By Allah! Even if you run away from the sword of today you will not remain safe from the sword of the next world. You are the foremost among the Arabs and great figures. Certainly in running away there is the wrath of Allah, unceasing disgrace and lasting shame. And certainly run

who runs does not lengthen his life, nor does anything come to intervene between him and his day (of death). Who is there to go towards Allah like the thirsty going to the water? Paradise lies under the edges of spears. Today the reputations (about the valor of warriors) will be tested.

By Allah! I am more eager to meet them (in combat) than they are for (returning to) their houses. O Lord! If they reject truth, disperse their group, divide their words (opinion) and destroy them on account of their sins.

They will not budge from their stand till the continuous striking of spears causes piercing (of wounds) through which wind may pass. And the hitting of swords cuts through the skull, cleaves bones and breaks forearms and legs, till they are attacked by contingent after contingent and assaulted by detachments which are followed by reserves for support, till their cities are continuously assailed by force after force and till the horses trample even the extreme ends of the lands, the tracks of their beast and their meadows.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “Add-da’q means trampling, e.g. ataduqqul-khuyulu bihawafiriha ardahum (the horses trample the ground with their hoofs). Anawahini ardihim means lands opposite each other. It is said, amanazilu bani fulanin tatanaharu, meaning: The houses of so-and-so face each other.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon on the occasion of the battle of Siffin. This battle was fought in the year 37 A.H. between Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and the governor of Syria, Mu`awiyah, for the so-called avenging for the killing of Caliph Othman. But in reality it was nothing more than Mu`awiyah who had been the autonomous governor of Syria from Caliph Omer’s days. He, not wanting to lose that status by swearing allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) but wanting to keep his authority intact by exploiting the killing of Caliph Othman, for later events, proved, that after securing the government, he did not take any practical step to avenge Othman’s blood. And he never spoke, not even through omission, about the killers of `Othman.

Although from the first day Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) realized that was inevitable, it was still necessary to exhaust all pleas., therefore, Monday the 12th Rajab, 36 A.H. he returned to Kufa after the Battle of Jamal. He sent Jarir ibn Abdillah al-Bajali with a letter to Mu`awiyah at Damascus wherein he wrote that the Muhajirun and the Ansar had sworn

allegiance to him and that he too should first swear him allegiance and thereafter place the case of Othman's killing before him so that he could pass verdict the reon according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah. But Mu`awiyah detained Jarir on several pretexts and after consulting Amr ibn al-As, staged a rebellion on the excuse of Othman's killing. And with the help of important persons of Syria, he convinced the ignorant people that the liability for Othman's life lay on Ali (ع) and that he, with his conduct, had encouraged the besiegers and had given them protection. Meanwhile he hung the blood-stained shirt of Othman and the amputated fingers of his wife Na'ila daughter of al-Farafisah on the pulpit in the Central Mosque of Damascus around which seventy thousand Syrians cried and swore the pledge to avenge Othman's blood. When Mu`awiyah had roused the feelings of the Syrians to such an extent that they were determined to lay down their lives and be killed, he secured their allegiance on the cause of avenging Othman's blood and busied himself in equipping for the battle. Thereafter, he showed all this to Jarīr then sent him back mortified.

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) learned of these matters through Jarir ibn Abdillah al-Bajali, he was forced to rise against Mu`awiyah, ordering Malik ibn Habib al-Yarbu'i to mobilize their forces in the valley of An-Nukhayla. Consequently, people from the suburbs of Kufa began arriving there in large numbers, till they exceeded eighty thousand. First of all, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent a vanguard contingent, eight thousand strong, under Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi and another of four thousand strong under Shurayh ibn Hani al-Harithi towards Syria. After the departure of this vanguard contingent he himself set out for Syria at the head of the remaining army on Wednesday the 5th of Shawwal. When he was out of the boundary of Kufa he offered zuhr (noon) prayer and after staying at Dayr Abu Musa, Nahr (river) Nars, Quba't Qubbin, Babil (Babylon), Dayr Ka`b, Kerbala', Sabat, Bahurasini, al-Anbar and Jazira arrived at ar-Riqqa. The people of this place were in favor of Othman and at this very place Simak ibn Makhtamah al-Asadi was putting up eight hundred men. These people had left Kufa to join Mu`awiyah after deserting Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). When they had seen Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's force, they had dismantled the bridge over the River Euphrates so that the Imam's army should not cross over to the other side of the river. But at the threatening of Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakh`i they were frightened. After consultations among themselves they put the bridge together again and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) passed over it with his army. When he alighted on the other side of the river he saw that Ziyad and Shurayh were also camped there along

with their men since both of them had adopted the land route. When, on reaching here, they found that Mu`awiyah was advancing with his armies towards the Euphrates and thinking that they will not be able to face him, they stopped there waiting for Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). When they had given the reason for their stopping the re, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) accepted their plea and sent them forward. When they reached surat ar-Rum they found that Abul-Awar al-Salami was camping there with his army. Both of them informed Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) of this, whereupon he despatched Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakhi in their wake as the Officer in Command, cautioning him not to initiate the fighting but to try to counsel them and appraise them of the correct status as far as possible. In this way, on reaching there Malik al-Ashtar encamped a little distance away. Fighting could have commenced any moment, but he did not interfere with the other side nor did he take any step by which fighting could have been commenced. But Abul-A`war suddenly attacked them at night, whereupon they took their swords out of the sheaths and prepared to repulse them. Clashes between the two sides went on for sometime but in the end, taking benefit of the darkness of night Abul-A`war fled away. Since fighting had already commenced, soon after the appearance of dawn an Iraqi commander, Hashim ibn `Utbah al-Mirqal az-Zuhri, took his status in the battlefield. From the other side also a contingent came to face him and the flames of fighting rose. At last Malik al-Ashtar challenged Abul-Awar to fight him, but he did not dare to face him and towards the evening Malik al-Ashtar went onward with his men. The next day Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) reached there with his force and set off for Siffin with the vanguard contingent and other forces. Mu`awiyah had already reached there and had set up his bases. He had also placed a guard on the Euphrates and had occupied it. On reaching there Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent him word to remove the guard from Euphrates, but he refused, whereupon theiraqis took out their swords and in a courageous attack captured the Euphrates. When this stage was over Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent Bashir ibn Amr al-Ansari, Sa’id ibn Qays al-Hamdani and Shabath ibn Rab`i at-Tamimi to Mu`awiyah to apprise him of the consequences of war and to make him agree to settlement and allegiance. But his relay was that they could not by any means let Othman’s blood remain neglected and that now the sword alone will arbitrate between them. Consequently in the month of Dhul-Hijja 36 A.H. both the parties decided on war and warriors from each side came out into the field to face their adversary. Those who entered the battlefield from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s side were: Hijr ibn Adiy al-Kindi, Shabath ibn Rab`i at-Tamimi, Khalid ibn al-Mu’ammar,

Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi, Ziyad ibn Khasafah at-Taymi, Sa'id ibn Qays al-Hamdani, Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari and Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakh`i while from the Syrians there were, `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn al-Walid al-Makhzumi, Abul-Awar al-Salami, Habib ibn Maslamah al-Fihri, `Abdullah ibn Dhi'l-Kala'al-Himyari, `Ubaydullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattab, Shurahbil ibn Simt al-Kindi and Hamzah ibn Malik al-Hamdani. When the month of Dhul-Hijja came to end the fighting had to be stopped for Muharram, but from the 1st of Safar fighting was resumed and both parties arrayed themselves opposite each other, equipped with swords, spears and other weapons. On Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's side Malik al-Ashtar was in command of the horsemen and Ammar ibn Yasir of the foot soldiers of Kufa while Sahl ibn Hanayf al-Ansari was in command of the horsemen and Qays ibn Sa`d of the foot soldiers of Basra. The banner of the army was given to Hashim ibn Utbah. In the army of the Syrians on the right hand contingent ibn Dhi'l-Kala' was in command, while on the left hand contingent Habīb ibn Maslamah, on horsemen Amr ibn al-As and on foot soldiers ad-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri were in command.

On the first day Malik ibn al-Ashtar entered the battlefield with his men and from the other side Habib ibn Maslamah came out with his men to face him and from both sides a fierce battle ensued. Throughout the day swords clashed with swords and spears with spears.

The next day, Hashim ibn Utbah came out with Ali's army and from the other side Abul-A`war with his footmen came to face him. When the two armies approached each other, horsemen fell upon horsemen and footmen upon footmen and continued attacking each other and they endured with great patience and steadfastness.

On the third day, Ammar ibn Yasir and Ziyad ibn an-Nadr came out with horsemen and foot soldiers and from the other side `Amr ibn al-As came forward with a big force. Ziyad attacked the horsemen of the opposite side and Malik al-Ashtar attacked the foot soldiers so furiously that the enemy's men lost ground and, failing to offer resistance, returned to their camps.

On the fourth day Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya appeared on the battlefield with his men. From the other side `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar came forward with the Syrian army and both the armies had a serious encounter.

On the fifth day, Abdullah ibn Abbas came forward and from the other side al-Walid ibn Uqba ibn Abu Mu'ayt came to face him. Abdullah ibn Abbas carried the assaults with great steadfastness and courage, giving such a brave fight that the enemy left the field in retreat.

On the sixth day, Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari came forward with the army and to face him Ibn Dhi'l-Kala' came out with his contingent. A fierce fighting ensued; at every step, bodies were seen falling and blood flowing like streams. At last, the darkness of the night separated the two armies.

On the seventh day, Malik al-Ashtar came out and to face him, Habib ibn Maslamah came forward with his men and fighting raged till zuhr (noon).

On the eighth day, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) himself came out with the army and made such an assault that the entire battlefield quaked and piercing through the ranks and warding off shots of arrows and spears he came and stood between both the lines. Then he challenged Mu`awiyah, whereupon the latter, along with Amr ibn al-As, came a bit closer. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him: `Amr! Come out and face me. Let whoever kills the other be the ruler, whereupon `Amr ibn al-As said to Mu`awiyah, "Ali (ع) is right. Gather a little courage and face him." Mu`awiyah replied, "I am not prepared to waste my life at your taunting."Having said this much, he went back. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saw him retreating he smiled and himself too returned. The daring with which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) led the attacks in Siffin can only be called a miraculous feat. Thus, whenever he came out challenging in the battlefield, the enemy lines were dispersed into utter disarray and confusion and even courageous combatants hesitated to appear against him. That is why on a few occasions he came onto the battlefield in changed outfit so that the enemy should not recognize him and someone should be prepared to engage with him personally. Once Arar ibn Adham came from the other side to engage with al-Abbas ibn Rabi`ah al-Harith ibn Abdul-Muttalib. They remained engaged but neither could defeat the other, until al-Abbas chanced to see that a link of his adversary's amour was loose. With a swift stroke he entangled the point of his sword in it then with a quick jerk he cut through a few more links. Then with true aim he gave such a blow that his sword went straight into his bosom. Seeing this, people raised the call of takbir. Mu`awiyah was startled at this noise and on coming to know that Arar ibn Adham had been slain he was much disturbed and shouted if there was anyone to take

revenge for Arar ibn Adham and kill al-Abbas. Al-Abbas came to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to seek permission. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) detained him, put on al-Abbas outfit and riding on al-Abbas's horse entered the battlefield. Taking him to be al-Abbas, the Lakhams said the following: "So you have got your chief's permission. In reply Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) recited the following verse:

Permission (to fight is) given unto those upon whom war is made for they have been oppressed and verily, to help them, Allah is Most Potent. (Holy Quran, 22: 39)

A man came out from the other side shouting like an elephant, ran amok and assaulted Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), but the Imam avoided the blow then gave such a clean cut with his sword to the other's back that he was split into two. People thought the blow had gone without avail, but when his horse jumped his two separate parts fell on the ground. After him another man came out but he too was finished in the twinkling of an eye. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) challenged others but from the strokes of his sword the enemy came to know that it was Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in the outfit of al-Abbas and so none dared come to face him.

On the ninth day, the right wing was under the command of Abdullah ibn Budayi and the left wing under that of Abdullah ibn Abbas. In the center was Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) himself. On the other side, Habib ibn Maslamah commanded the Syrian army. When both the lines had come face-to-face with each other, the valiant soldiers drew out their swords and pounced upon one another like ferocious lions and fighting raged on all sides. The banner of the right wing of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's army was revolving in the hands of Banu Hamdan. Whenever anyone of them fell, martyred, someone else will pick up the banner. First of all Kurayb ibn Shurayh raised the banner, on his fall Shurahbil ibn Shurayh took it up, then Marthad ibn Shurayh, then Hubayrah ibn Shurayh then Yarim ibn Shurayh, then Sumayr ibn Shurayh and after the killing of all these six brothers the banner was taken up by Sufyan, then Abd, then Kurayb, the three sons of Zayd, who all fell martyred. After that the banner was lifted by two brothers (sons) of Bashir namely `Umayr and al-Harithi and when they too fell martyred, Wahab ibn Kurayb took up the banner. On this day the enemy's greater attention was on the right wing and its assaults were so fierce that the men lost ground and began to retreat from the battlefield. Only three hundred men remained with the Officer in Command Abdullah ibn Budayl. On seeing

this Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) asked Malik al-Ashtar to call them back and challenge them as to where they were fleeing. If the days of life are over they cannot avoid death by running away. Now the defeat of the right wing could not be without effect on the left wing, so Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) turned to the left wing and advanced forward, forcing through the enemy lines, whereupon a slave of Banu Umayyah named Ahmar said to him, "Allah may cause me to die if I fail to slay you today!"On hearing this, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's slave Kaysan leapt over him but was killed by him. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saw this, he caught him by the skirt of his amour and, picking him up, threw him down so forcefully that all his joints were smashed, whereupon Imām Hassan (ع) and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya came forward and dispatched him to Hell. Meanwhile, after having been called to Malik al-Ashtar and his having made them feel ashamed, those who retreated came back and again assaulted so steadfastly that pushing back the enemy they reached the place where Abdullah ibn Budayl was surrounded by the enemy. When he saw his own men he picked up courage and leapt towards Mu`awiyah's tent with drawn sword. Malik al-Ashtar tried to stop him but he could not and, killing seven Syrians, he reached the tent of Mu`awiyah. When Mu`awiyah noticed him close by he ordered him to be stoned, as a result of which he was overpowered and the Syrians crowded over him and killed him. When Malik al-Ashtar saw this he proceeded forward with the combatants of Banu Hamdan and Banu Madhhaj for an attack on Mu`awiyah and began dispersing the contingent on guard around him. When, out of the five circles of his guards only one remained to be dispersed, Mu`awiyah put his foot in the stirrup of his horse in order to run away, but on someone's encouragement again stopped. On another side of the battlefield a tumult was raging from one end to the other by the swords of Ammar ibn Yasir and Hashim ibn Utbah. From whatever side Ammar passed, the companions (of the Holy Prophet [ص]) flocked around him then made such a joint assault that destruction spread throughout the enemy lines. When Mu`awiyah saw them advancing he threw his fresh forces towards them. But he continued displaying the excellence of his bravery under the storm of swords and spears. At last Abul-Adiyah al-Juhani hit him with a spear from which he could not balance himself then Ibn Hawiy (Jawn as-Saksiki) came forward and slew him. Ammar ibn Yasir's death caused tumult in Mu`awiyah's ranks because about him they had heard the Holy Prophet (ص) having said the following: "Ammar will be killed at the hands of a rebellious party. Thus before he fell as martyr Dhul-Kala' had said to `Amr ibn al-As, "I see Ammar on Ali's side; are we that rebellious

party?" Amr ibn al-As had assured him that eventually Ammar would join them, but when he was killed fighting on Ali's side, the rebellious party stood exposed and no room was left for any other interpretation. Nevertheless Mu`awiyah started telling the Syrians: "We did not kill Ammar, but Ali did it because he brought him to the battlefield."When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard this cunning sentence, he remarked, "In that case, the Holy Prophet (ص) killed (his uncle the valiant) Hamzah because he had brought him to the battlefield of Uhud." Hashim ibn Utbah also fell in this conflict. He was killed by al-Harith ibn Mundhir at-Tanukhi. After him the banner of the contingent was taken over by his son Abdullah.

When such fearless warriors were gone, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to the warriors from the tribes of Hamdan and Rabi`ah, "To me, you are like amour and spear. Get up and teach these rebels a lesson."Consequently, twelve thousand combatants from the tribes of Rabi`ah and Hamdan stood up, swords in hand. The banner was taken up by Hudyan ibn al-Mundhir. Entering the lines of the enemy, they used their swords in such a way that heads began to drop, bodies fell in huge heaps and on every side streams of blood flowed. And the assaults of those swordsmen knew no stopping till the day began to end with all its devastation. And the gloom of eve set in, ushering in that fearful night which is known in history as the night of al-Harir, wherein the clashing of weapons, the hoofs of horses and the hue and cry of the Syrians created such notice that even voices reaching the ears could not be heard. On Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's side, his wrong-crushing slogans raised waves of courage and valor and on the enemy's side they shook the hearts in their bosoms. The battle was at its zenith. The quivers of the bowmen had become empty. The stalks of the spears had been broken. Hand to hand fighting went on with swords only and dead bodies collected in heaps, till by morning the number of killed had exceeded thirty thousand.

On the tenth day, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's men showed the same high morale. On the right wing, Malik al-Ashtar held the command and on the left wing Abdullah ibn Abbas. Assaults went on like the assaults of new soldiers. Signs of defeat appeared on the Syrians and they were about to leave the battlefield and run away, when five hundred Holy Qurans were raised on spears changing the entire face of the battle. Moving swords stopped, the weapon of deceit was successful and the way was clear for wrong to hold its sway.

In this battle forty-five thousand Syrians were killed while twenty-five thousand Iraqis fell as martyrs as we read in Kitab Siffin by Nasr ibn Muzahim al-Minqari [d. 212 A.H.] and Tarikh al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 3256-3349).

Sermon 124

About the Kharijites and Their Opinion on Arbitration:

We did not name people arbitrators, but we named the Holy Quran the Arbitrator. The Holy Quran is a book covered between two flaps and it does not speak. It should, therefore, necessarily have an interpreter. Men alone can be such interpreters. When these people invited us to name the Holy Quran as the arbitrator between us, we could not be the party turning away from the Book of Allah, since Allah has said the following:

> If you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah
> and the Prophet (ص). (Holy Quran, 4: 59)

Reference to Allah means that we decide according to the Holy Quran while reference to the Prophet (ص) means that we follow his Sunnah. Now therefore, if arbitration were truly done through the Book of Allah (Holy Quran), we will be the most rightful of all people for the Caliphate; or if it were done by the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (ص), we will be the most preferable of them.

Concerning your point why I allowed a time lag between myself and them with regard to the Arbitration, I did so in order that the ignorant may find out (the truth) and one who already knows may hold with it firmly. Possibly Allah may, as a result of this peace, improve the condition of these people and they will not be caught by the throats and will not, before indication of the right, fall into rebellion as before. Certainly the best man before Allah is he who loves most to act according to right, even though it causes him hardship and grief, rather than according to wrong, even though it gives him benefit and increase.

So, where are you being mislead and from where have you been brought (to this state)? Be prepared to march to the people who have deviated from the right and do not see it, have been entangled in wrong-doing and are not corrected. They are away from the Book and turned from the (right) path. You are not trustworthy to rely upon, nor are you holders of honor to be adhered to. You are very bad in kindling the fire of

fighting. Woe to you! I had to bear a lot of worries from you. Some days I call to you (to jihad) and some days, I speak to you in confidence. You are neither true free men at the time of call, nor trustworthy brothers at the time of speaking in confidence.

Sermon 125

When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Spoken Ill of for Showing Equality in the Distribution (Of Shares from Bayt al-Mal or the Muslim Public Treasury) He Said the Following :

Do you command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed? By Allah, I will not do so as long as the world goes on and as long as one star leads another in the sky. Even if it were my property, I will have distributed it equally among them, then why not when the property is that of Allah. Beware; certainly that giving of wealth without any right for it is wastefulness and lavishness. It raises its doer in this world, but lowers him in the next world. It honors him before people, but disgraces him with Allah. If a man gives his property to those who have no right for it or do not deserve it, Allah deprives him of their gratefulness and their love too will be for others. Then if he falls on bad days and needs their help, they will prove the worst comrades and ignoble friends.

Sermon 126

About the Kharijites :

If you do not stop believing that I have gone wrong and have been misled, why do you consider that the common men among the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (ص) have gone astray like me and accuse them with my wrong and hold them unbelievers on account of my sins. You are holding your swords on your shoulders and using them right and wrong. You are confusing those who have committed sins with those who have not. You know that the Prophet (ص) stoned the protected (married) adulterers, then he also said his burial prayer and allowed his successors to inherit from him. He amputated (the hand of) the thief and whipped the unprotected (unmarried) adulterer, but thereafter allowed their shares from the booty and they married Muslim women. Thus the Prophet (ص) took them to ask for their sins and also abided by Allah's

commands about them, but did not disallow them their rights created by Islam, nor did he remove their names from its followers.

Certainly you are the most evil of all persons and are those whom Satan has put on his lines and thrown out into his wayless land. With regard to me, two categories of people will be ruined, namely he who loves me too much and the hatred which takes him away from rightfulness. The best man with regard to me is he who is on the middle course. So be with him and be with the great majority (of Muslims) because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the one isolated from the group is (a prey) to Satan just as the one isolated from the flock of sheep is (a prey) to the wolf.

Beware! Whoever calls to this course, kill him, even though he may be under this headband of mine. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what the Holy Quran revives and to destroy what the Holy Quran destroys. Revival means to unite on it (in a matter) and destruction means to divide on a matter. If the Holy Quran drives us to them we should follow them and if it drives them to us they should follow up. May you have no father! (Woe to you), I did not cause you any misfortune, nor have I deceived you in any matter, nor created any confusion. Your own group had unanimously suggested in favor of these two men and we bound them that they will not exceed the Holy Quran but they deviated from it and abandoned the right although both of them were conversant with it. This wrong-doing was the dictate of their hearts. So they trod upon it, although we had stipulated that in arbitrating with justice and sticking to rightfulness they will avoid the evil of their own views and the mischief of their own verdict (but since this has happened the award is not acceptable to us).

Sermon 127

About Important Events in Basra :.

O Ahnaf! It is as though I see him advancing with an army which has neither dust nor noise, nor rustling of reins, nor neighing of horses. They are trampling the ground with their feet as if they are the feet of ostriches.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) pointed to the Chief of the Blacks (Sahibuz-Zanj)."

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "Woe unto you (O people of Basra's) inhabited streets and decorated houses which possess wings like the wings of vultures and trunks like the trunks of elephants. They are the people from among whom if one is killed he is not mourned and if one is lost he is not searched for. I turn this world over on its face, value it only according to its (low) value and look at it with an eye suitable to it."

Part of the same sermon:

Referring to the Turks (Mongols), he said,

I can see a people whose faces are like shields covered with roughly-scraped skins. They outfit themselves in silken and woolen clothe s and hold dear excellent horses. Their killing and bloodshed shall take place freely till the wounded shall walk over the dead and the number of runners-away shall be less than those taken prisoner.

One of his companions said to him, "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib! You have been given knowledge of hidden things," whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) smiled and said to the man who belonged to the tribe of Banu Kalb, "O brother of Kalb! This is not knowledge of hidden things (ilmul-ghayb)! These matters have been acquired from him (namely in Prophet (ص)) who knew them. As regard knowledge of hidden things, that means knowledge of the Day of Judgement and the things covered by Allah in the verse;

> Verily, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour. (Holy Quran, 31: 34)

Therefore, Allah, and only Allah, knows what is there in the wombs, whether male or female, ugly or handsome, if he/she will be generous or miserly, mischievous or pious, a fuel for Hell or in the company of the Prophet (ص) in Paradise. This is the knowledge of the hidden things which is not known to anyone save Allah. All else is that whose knowledge Allah passed on to His Prophet (ص) and he passed it on to me and prayed for me that my bosom may retain it and my ribs may hold it.

Ali ibn Muhammad was born in the village of Warzanin in the suburbs of Ray and belonged to the Azariqah sect of the Kharijites. He claimed to be a Sayyid (descendant of the Holy Prophet (ص)) by showing

himself the son of Muhammad ibn Ahmed al-Mukhtafi ibn Isa ibn Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib, but the experts on genealogy, as well as biographers, have all rejected his claim to being a Sayyid and have given his father's name as Muhammad ibn Abd ar-Rahim instead of Muhammad ibn Ahmed. The former was from the tribe of Abdul-Qays and had been born of a Sindi maid-slave.

Ali ibn Muhammad (ص) rose as an insurgent in 255 A.H. in the reign of al-Muhtadi Billah and associated with him the people from the suburbs of Basra on promise of money, wealth and freedom. He entered Basra on the 17th Shawwal, 255 A.H. killing and looting and in only two days he put to death thirty thousand individuals, men, women and children and displayed extreme opposition, bloodshed, savageness and ferocity. He dismantled houses, burnt mosques and after continuous killing and devastation for fourteen years, was killed in the month of Safar, 270 A.H. in the reign of Muwaffaq Billah. Then people got rid of his devastating deeds.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's prediction is one of those predictions which throw light on his knowledge of the unknown. The details of his army given by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) namely that there will be neither the neighing of horses nor the rustling of weapons the rein is a historical fact. The historian al-Tabari has written that when this man reached near al-Karkh (a sector of Baghdad) with the intention of instruction, the people of that place welcomed him and a man presented him a horse for which no rein could be found despite a search. At last he rode it using a rope for the rein. Similarly there were at that time only three swords in his force-one with himself, one with Ali ibn Aban al-Muhallabi and one with Muhammad ibn Salm but later they collected some more weapons by marauding.

The prediction of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) stated above is about the attack of the Tartars (Mongols) who were inhabitants of the Mongolian desert in the north west of Turkey. These semi-savage tribes lived by marauding, killing and devastating. They used to fight among themselves and attack neighboring areas. Each tribe had a separate chief who was deemed responsible for their protection. Chingiz [Jenkiz] Khan (Temujin) who was one of the ruling chiefs of these tribes and was very brave and courageous had risen to organize all their divided tribes into one and, despite their opposition he succeeded in overpowering them through his might and sagacity. Collecting a large number under his

banner he rose in 606 A.H. like a torrent and went on dominating cities and ruining populations till he conquered the area up to North China.

When his authority was established he offered his terms of settlement to Ala'ud-Din Khwarazm Shah, ruler of the neighboring country of Turkey and through a deputation concluded an agreement with him that Tartar traders will be allowed to visit his country for trade and their life and property will not be subject to any harm. For some time they traded freely without fear but on one occasion Ala'ud-Din accused them of spying, seized their goods and had them killed by the Chief of Atrar. When Chingiz Khan learned of the breach of the agreement and the killing of Tartar merchants his eyes cast forth flames and he began trembling with rage. He sent word to Ala'ud-Din to return the goods of the Tartar merchants and to hand over to him the ruler of Atrar. Ala'ud-Din, who was mad with power and authority, did not pay any heed and acting short-sightedly killed even the plenipotentiary of Jenkiz Khan. Now Chinzing Khan lost all patience and his eyes filled with blood. He rose with his sword in hand and the Tartar warriors leapt towards Bukhara on their speedy stallions. Ala'ud-Din came out with four hundred thousand combatants to face him but could not resist the incessant assaults of the Tartars and having been vanquished only after a few attacks ran away to Nishabur across the river Jaxartes (Sihun). The Tartars smashed Bukhara and razed it to the ground. They pulled down schools and mosques, burning the houses to ashes and killing men and women without distinction. The next year they assaulted Samarqand and devastated it completely. After the fight of Ala'ud-Din, his son Jalalu'd-Din Khwarazm Shah had assumed the reins of government. The Tartars chased him also and for ten years he fled from one place to the other but did not fall in their hands. At last he crossed over the river out of the boundaries of his realm. During this time the Tartars did their utmost to ruin populated lands and to annihilate humanity. No city escaped their ruining and no populace could avoid their trampling. Wherever they went they upset the kingdom, overthrown governments and in a short time established their authority over the northern region of Asia.

When Chingiz Khan died in 622 A.H. his own son Ogedei Khan succeeded him. He searched out Jalalu'd-Din in 628 A.H. And killed him. After him Mongka Khan, the son of the other son of Chingiz Khan, occupied the throne. After Mongka Khan, Qubilai Khan succeeded to a part of the country and the control of Asia fell to the share of his brother Hulagu Khan. On the division of the whole realm among the grandsons of Chingiz Khan, Hulagu Khan was thinking of conquering Muslims area when the Hanafite of Khurasan in enmity with the Shafi'ite invited him to

attack Khurasan. He, therefore, led an assault on Khurasan and the Hanafite, thinking themselves to be safe from the Tartars, opened the city gates for them. But the Tartars did not make any distinction between Hanafite and Shafi'ite and killed whoever fell to their hands. After killing most of its population they took it in occupation. These very differences between the Hanafite and the Shafi'ite opened for him the door of conquest up to Iraq. Consequently, after conquering Khurasan his courage increased and in 656 A.H. he marched on Baghdad with two hundred thousand Tartars, al-Musta'sim Billah's army and the people of Baghdad jointly faced them, but it was not in their power to stop this torrent of calamity. The result was that the Tartars entered Baghdad on the day of Ashura' carrying with them bloodshed and ruin. They remained busy in killing for forty days. Rivers of blood flowed in the streets and all the alleys were filled with dead bodies. Hundred of thousands of people were put to the sword while al-Musta'sim Billah was trampled to death under foot. Only those people who hid themselves in wells or underground places and hid from their sight could survive. This was the devastation of Baghdad which shook of Abbasid Kingdom to its foundation, so that its flag could never fly thereafter.

Some historians have laid the blame of this ruin on ibn al-Alqami (Abu Talib, Muhammad ibn Ahmed al-Baghdadi), the minister of al-Musta'sim Billah, by holding that, moved by the general masses of the Shi'as and the ruin of al-Karkh sector (of Baghdad), he invited Hulagu Khan through the latter's minister, the great scholar Nasir'd-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad at-Tusi, to march on Baghdad. Even if it be so, it is not possible to ignore the historical fact that before this the Abbasid Caliph an-Nasir Lidini'llah had initiated the move for the attack on the Muslim areas. When the Khwarazm Shahs declined to acknowledge the authority of the Caliphate he had sent word to Chingiz Khan to march on Khwarazm, from which the Tartars had understood that there was no unity and cooperation among the Muslims. Thereafter the Hanafite had sent for Hulagu Khan to crush the Shafi'ite as a consequence of which the Tartars secured control over Khurasan and prepared the way to march towards Baghdad. In these circumstances to hold only ibn al-Alqami responsible for the ruination of Baghdad and to ignore the move of an-Nasir Lidinillah and the dispute between the Hanafite and the Shafi'ite will be covering up the facts, when in fact the cause for the ruin of Baghdad was this very conquest of Khurasan, whose real movers were the Hanafite inhabitants of the place. It was by this conquest that Hulagu Khan had the courage to march on the center of Islam.; otherwise, it cannot have been the result of a single individual's message that he

assaulted an old capital like Baghdad, the awe of whose power and grandeur was seated in the hearts of a large part of the world.

To know hidden things on a personal level is one thing, while to be gifted by Allah with knowledge of any matter and to convey it to others is different. The knowledge of the future which the prophets and vicegerents possess is gained by them through Allah's teaching and informing. Allah alone has knowledge of events which are to happen in the future. Of course, He passes this knowledge on to whoever He wills. Thus He says the following:

(He alone is) the One Who knows the unseen, neither does He reveal His secrets to any (one else) **save** to that one of the Messengers whom He chooses. (Holy Quran, 72: 26-27)

In this way, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) also received knowledge of the future through the instructions of the Prophet (ص) or inspiration from Allah, for which these words of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) stand testimony. Of course, sometimes it is not proper or expedient to disclose certain matters and they are allowed to remain under a veil. Then no one can be acquainted with them as Allah says,

Verily, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour and He sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs, and no soul knows what it shall earn in the morrow, nor does any soul know in what land it shall die: Verily Allah is All-knowing, All-aware. (Holy Quran, 31: 34)

Sermon 128

About Measures and Weights, the Transience of this World and the Condition of its People :.

O servants of Allah! You and whatever you desire from this world are like guests with fixed period of stay and like debtors called upon to pay. Life is getting short while (the records of) actions are being preserved. Many strivers are wasting (their efforts) and many of those who exert are heading towards harm. You are in a period when steps of virtue are moving backwards, steps of evil are moving forward and Satan is increasing his eagerness to ruin people. This is the time that his equipment is strong, his traps have been spread and his prey has become easy (to catch).

Cast your glance over people wherever you like, you will see either a poor man suffering from poverty, or a rich man ignoring Allah despite His bounty over him, or a miser increasing his wealth by trampling on Allah's obligations, or an unruly person closing his ears to all counsel. Where are your good people; where are your virtuous people? Where are your high-spirited men and generous men? Where are those of you who avoid deceit in their business and remain pure in their behavior? Have they not all departed from this ignoble, transitory and troublesome world? Have you not been left among people who are just like rubbish and so low that lips avoid mention of them and do not move even to condemn their low status.

Verily we are Allah's, and verily unto Him shall we return.
(Holy Quran, 2: 156)

Mischief has appeared and there is no one to oppose and change it, nor anyone to dissuade from it or desist from it. Do you, with these qualities, hope to secure abode in the purified neighborhood of Allah and to be regarded His staunch lovers? Alas! Allah cannot be deceived about His paradise and His will cannot be secured save by His obedience. Allah may curse those who advise good but they themselves avoid it and those who desist others from evil but they themselves act upon it.

Sermon 129

Delivered When Abu Dharr (رض) Was Exiled to Rabadha:

O Abu Dharr! You demonstrated your anger in the Name of Allah; therefore, have hope in Him for Whom you became angry. The people were afraid of you in the matter of their (seeking the pleasure of this) world while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them taking away what you fear them about. How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you. You will shortly know who is the gainer tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) and who is more enviable. Even if these skies and earth were closed to some individual and he feared Allah, then Allah will open them for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions they will have loved you and if you had shared in it they will have given you asylum.

Abu Dharr al-Ghifari's name was Jundab ibn Junadah. He was an inhabitant of ar-Rabadha which was a small village on the east side of Medīna. When he heard about the proclamation of the Prophet (ص), he came to Mecca and after making inquiries saw the Prophet (ص) and accepted Islam whereupon the unbelievers of Quraish gave him all sorts of troubles and inflicted pain after pain, but he remained steadfast. Among the acceptors of Islam he is the third, fourth or fifth. Along with this precedence in Islam his renunciation and piety was so high that the Prophet (ص) said, "Among my people, Abu Dharr is the like `Ìsa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary) in renunciation and piety."

During the reign of `Umar, Abu Dharr left for Syria, and during Othman's reign, he also remained there. He spent his days in counseling, preaching, acquainting people with the greatness of the members of the Prophet's family and guiding the people to the rightful path. The traces of Shi`ism now found in Syria and Jabal Amil (northern Lebanon) are the result of his preaching and activity and the fruit of seeds sown by him. The Governor of Syria, Mu`awiyah, did not like the conduct of Abu Dharr and was much disgusted with his open criticism and mention of the money-making and other wrongful activities of Othman. But he could do nothing. At last he wrote to Othman that if he remained there any longer he will rouse the people against the Caliph. They should, therefore, be some remedy against this. On this, Othman wrote to him that Abu Dharr should be seated on an unsaddled camel and dispatched to Medina. The order was obeyed and Abu Dharr was sent to Medina. On reaching Medina he resumed his preaching of righteousness and truth. He will recall to the people the days of the Holy Prophet (ص) and refrain them from displays of extravagance, whereupon Othman was much perturbed and tried to restrict his freedom of speech. One day, he sent for him and said, "I have come to know that you go about propagating that the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "When Banu Umayyah become thirty in number, they will regard the cities of Allah as their own property, His creatures as their slaves and His religion as the tool of their treachery."

Abu Dharr replied that he had heard the Prophet (ص) say so. Othman said that he was speaking a lie. Othman inquired from those beside him if any one of them had heard this tradition. They all replied in the negative...! Abu Dharr then said that the same enquiry should be made from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Ali (ع) was sent for and asked about it. Ali (ع) said that it was correct and that Abu Dharr was telling the truth. Othman inquired on what basis he gave testimony for the correctness of

this tradition. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied that he himself had heard the Holy Prophet (ص) say, "There is no speaker under the sky or over the earth more truthful than Abu Dharr."

Now Othman could do nothing. If he still held him to be liar it will mean falsification of the Prophet (ص). He, therefore, kept quiet despite much perturbation, since he could not refute him. On the other side Abu Dharr began speaking against the usurping of Muslims' property quite openly and whenever he saw Othman he will recite this verse:

nd those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's way; announce you unto them a painful chastisement. On the Day (of Judgement) when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then shall be branded with it their foreheads and their sides and their backs; (saying unto them) AThis is what you hoarded up for yourselves, taste you then what you did hoard u, p. (Holy Quran, 9: 34-35)

Othman promised him money but could not entrap this free man in his golden net, then resorted to repression but could not stop his truth-speaking tongue. At last he ordered him to leave and go to ar-Rabadha and deputed Marwan, son of the man (al-Hakam) exiled by the Prophet (ص), to turn him out of Medina. At the same time he issued the inhumane order that no one should speak to him nor see him off. But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain (ع), Aqil ibn Abu Talib, Abdullah ibn Ja`far and Ammar ibn Yasir did not pay any heed to this order and accompanied him to see him off and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered these sentences (i.e. the above sermon) on that occasion.

In Rabadha, Abu Dharr had to put up with a very hard life. It was here that his son, Dharr, and his wife died and the sheep and goats that he was keeping for his livelihood also died. Of his children, only one daughter remained who equally shared his starvation and woes. When the means of subsistence were fully exhausted and day after day passed without food she said to Abu Dharr, "Father! How long shall we go on like this? We should go somewhere in search of livelihood."Abu Dharr took her with him and set off for the wilderness. He could not find even foliage to sustain themselves. At last, he was tired; he sat down somewhere. Then he collected some sand and, putting his head on it, lay down. Soon he began gasping, his eyes rolled up and the pangs of death gripped him.

When the daughter saw this condition, she was perplexed and said, “Father! If you die in this vast wilderness, how shall I manage for your burial all by myself?”He replied, “Do not get upset. The Prophet (ص) told me that I shall die in helplessness and some Iraqis will arrange for my burial. After my death, you must put a sheet over me then sit by the roadway. When some caravan passes by, tell them that the Prophet’s companion Abu Dharr has died.”Consequently, after her father’s death, she went and sat by the roadside. After some time, a caravan did, indeed, pass by. It included Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakh`i, Hijr ibn Abdi at-Ta’i, Alqamah ibn Qays an-Nakh`i, Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhhan al-Abdi, al-Aswad ibn Yazid an-Nakh`i etc. who were all fourteen persons in number. When they heard about the passing away of Abu Dharr they were shocked at his helpless death. They stopped their riding beasts and postponed the onward journey for his burial. Malik al-Ashtar gave a sheet of cloth for his shroud. It was valued at four thousand Dirhams. After his funeral rites and burial they departed. This happened in the month of Dhul-Hijja, 32 A.H.

Sermon 130

Grounds for Accepting the Caliphate and the Qualities of a Ruler and Governor

O (people of) differing minds and divided hearts, whose bodies are present but wits are absent. I am leading you (amicably) towards truthfulness, but you run away from it like goats and sheep running away from the howling of a lion. How hard it is for me to uncover for you the secrets of justice, or to straighten the curve of truthfulness.

O Lord! You knows that what we did was not to seek power nor to acquire anything from the vanities of the world. We rather wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to usher prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among thy creatures might be safe and Your forsaken commands might be established. O Lord! I am the first who leaned (towards You) and who heard and responded (to the call of Islam). No one preceded me in prayer (salat) except the Prophet (ص).

You certainly know that he who is in charge of honor, life, booty (enforcement of), legal commandments and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed will aim at their wealth. Nor should he be ignorant as he will then mislead them with his ignorance, nor be of rude behavior who will estrange them with his rudeness. Nor should he

deal unjustly with wealth thus preferring one group over another, nor should he accept a bribe while taking decisions, as he will forfeit (othe rs) rights and hold them up without finality, nor should he ignore Sunnah as he will ruin the people.

Sermon 131

Warning About Death

We praise Him for whatever He takes or gives or whatever He inflicts on us or tries us with. He is aware of all that is hidden and He sees all that is concealed. He knows all that breasts contain or eyes hide. We render testimony that there is no god except He and that Muhammad (ص) - peace be upon him and his progeny - has been chosen by Him and deputed by Him - testimony tendered both secretly and openly, by heart and by tongue.

Part of the same sermon:

By Allah! Certainly it is reality not fun, truth not falsehood. It is none else than death. Its caller is making himself heard and its dragsman is making haste. The majority of the people should not deceive you. You have seen those who lived before you, amassed wealth, feared poverty and felt safe from its (evil) consequences, the longevity of desires and the (apparent) distance from death. How, then, death overtook them, turned them out of their homelands and took them out of their places of safety. They were borne on coffins, people were busy about them one after another, carrying them on their shoulders and supporting them with their hands.

Did you not witness those who engaged in long-reaching desires, built strong buildings, amassed much wealth but their houses turned to graves and their collections turned into ruin. Their property devolved on the successors and their spouses on those who came after them. They cannot (now) add to their good deeds nor invoke (Allah's) mercy with regard to evil acts. Therefore, whoever makes his heart habituated to fear Allah achieves a forward status and his action is successful. Prepare yourself for it and do all that you can for Paradise. Certainly this world has not been made a place of permanent stay for you. But it has been created as a pathway in order that you may take from it the provisions of your (good) actions for the permanent house (in Paradise). Be ready for departure from here and keep close your riding animals for setting off.

Sermon 132

On the Glory of Allah

This world and the next have submitted to Him their reins and the skies and earth have flung their keys towards Him. The thriving trees bow to Him in the morning and evening and produce for Him - flaming fire from their branches and at His command, turn their own feed into ripe fruits.

Part of the Same Sermon Bout the Holy Quran

The Book of Allah is among you. It speaks and its tongue does not falter. It is a house whose pillars do not fall down and a power whose supporters are never routed.

Part of the Same Sermon about the Holy Prophet (ص)

Allah deputed the Prophet (ص) after a gap from the previous prophets when there was much talk (among the people). With him, "Allah exhausted the series of prophets and ended the revelation. He then fought for Him those who were turning away from Him and were equating others with Him.

Part of the same sermon about this world

Certainly this world is the end of the sight of the (mentally) blind who see nothing beyond it. The sight of a looker (who looks with the eye of his mind) pierces through and realizes that the (real) house is beyond this world. The looker, therefore, wants to get out of it while the blind wants to get into it. The looker collects provision from it (for the next world) while the blind collects provision for this very world.

Part of the same sermon: A caution

You should know that a man gets satiated and wearied with everything except life because he does not find for himself any pleasure in death. It is in the status of life for a dead heart, sight for the blind eye, hearing for the deaf ear, quenching for the thirsty and it contains complete sufficiency and safety.

The Book of Allah is that though which you see, you speak and you hear. Its one part speaks for the other part and one part testifies to the other. It does not create differences about Allah nor does it mislead its own follower from (the path of) Allah. You are joined together in hatred of each other and in the growing of herbage on your filth (i.e. for covering inner dirt by good appearance outside). You are sincere with one another in your love of desires and bear enmity against each other in earning wealth. The evil spirit (Satan) has perplexed you and deceit has misled you. I seek the help of Allah for myself and you.

Sermon 133

Delivered when Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) about himself, taking part in the march towards Rome (Byzantine Empire) .

Allah has taken upon Himself for the followers of this religion the strengthening of boundaries and hiding of the secret places. Allah helped them when they were few and could not protect themselves. He is living and will not die. If you will yourself proceed towards the enemy and clash with them and fall into some trouble, there will be no place of refuge for the Muslims other than their remote cities, nor any place they will return to. Therefore, you should send there an experienced man and send with him people of good performance who are well-intentioned. If Allah grants you victory, then this is what you want. If it is otherwise, you will serve as a support for the people and a returning place for the Muslims.

About Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the strange status is adopted that on the one hand, it is said that he was ignorant of practical politics and unacquainted with ways of administration from which it is intended that the rebellions created by the Umayyad's lust for power should be shown to be the outcome of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's weak administration. On the other hand, much is made of the various occasion when the then Caliphs consulted Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in important affairs of State in the matter of wars with unbelievers. The aim in this is not to exhibit his correctness of thinking and judgement of deep sagacity but to show that there was unity and concord between him and the Caliphs so that attention should not be paid to the fact that in some matters they also differed and that mutual clashes had also occurred. History shows that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did have differences of principles with the Caliphs and did not approve every step of theirs. In the

sermon of ash-Shaqshaqiyya he has expressed in loud words his difference of opinion and anger about each regime. Nevertheless, this difference does not mean that correct guidance should be withheld in collective Islamic problems. Again, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's character was so high that no one could imagine that he will ever evade giving counsel which concerned the common wealth, or will give such counsel which will damage public interests. That is why, despite differences of principles, he was consulted. This throws light on the greatness of his character and the correctness of his thinking and judgement. Similarly, it is a prominent trait of the Holy Prophet's character that despite rejecting his claim to Prophethood the unbelievers acknowledged him the best trustee and could never doubt his trustworthiness. Rather, even during clashes of mutual opposition they entrusted to him their property without fear and never suspected that their property will be misappropriated. Similarly, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was held to occupy so high a status of trust and confidence that friend and foe both trusted in the correctness of his counsel. So, just as the Prophet's conduct shows his height of trustworthiness and just as it cannot be inferred from it that there was mutual accord between him and the unbelievers because trust has its own place while the clash of Islam and unbelief has another, in the same way, despite having differences with the Caliphs, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was regarded as the protector of national and community interests and as the guardian of Islam's well-being and prosperity. Thus when national interests were involved he was consulted and he tendered his unbiased advice raising himself above personal ends and keeping in view the Prophet's tradition to the effect that "He who is consulted is a trustee never allowed any dishonesty or duplicity or interfere. When on the occasion of the battle of Palestine, the `Umar consulted him about his taking part in it himself, then, irrespective of whether or not his opinion will accord with `Omer's feelings, he kept in view Islam's prestige and existence and counseled him to stay in his place and to send to the battle-front such a man who should be experienced and well-versed in the are of fighting because the going of an inexperienced man will have damaged the established prestige of Islam and the awe in which the Muslims were held which had existed from the Prophet's days will have vanished. In fact, in the Omer's going there Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saw signs of defeat and vanquishment. He, therefore, found Islam's interest to lie in detaining him and indicated his view in the words that:.

If you have to retreat from the battlefield, it will not be your personal defeat only, but the Muslims will lose heart by it and leave the battlefield and disperse here and there because with the officer in

command leaving the field the army too will lose ground. Furthermore, with the center being without the Caliph there will be no hope of any further assistance from behind which could sustain courage of the combatants.

This is that counsel which is put forth as a proof of mutual accord, although this advice was tendered in view of Islam's prestige and life which was dearer to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) than any other interest. No particular individual's life was dear to him for which he might have advised against participation in the battle.

Sermon 134

There was some exchange of words between Othman ibn Affan and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) when al-Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas[1] said to Othman that he will deal with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on his behalf whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to al-Mughirah:

O son of the accursed and issueless and of a tree which has neither root nor branch. Will you deal with me? By Allah, Allah will not grant victory to him whom you support, nor will he be able to stand up whom you raise. Get away from us. Allah may keep you away from your purpose. Then do whatever you like. Allah may not have mercy on you if you have pity on me.

Sermon 135

About the Sincerity of His Own Intention and Support of the Oppressed

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[164]Al-Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas ath-Thaqafi was among the well-wishers of Othman ibn Affan and the son of his paternal aunt. His brother Abul-Hakam ibn al-Akhnas was killed at the hands of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in the battle of Uhud because of which he bore malice against Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). His father was one of those people who accepted Islam at the time of fall of Mecca but retained heresy and hypocrisy in his heart. That is why Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) called him accursed and he called him issueless because he who has a son like al-Mughirah deserves to be called "issueless".

Your allegiance to me was not without thinking,[165] nor is my and your status the same. I seek you for Allah's sake but you seek me for your own benefits. O people! support me despite your heart's desires. By Allah, I will take revenge for the oppressed from the oppressor and will put a string in the nose of the oppressor and drag him to the spring of truthfulness even though he may grudge it.

Sermon 136

About Talhah and az-Zubayr

By Allah, they did not find any disagreeable thing in me, nor did they do justice between me and themselves. Surely, they are now demanding a right which they have abandoned and blood which they have themselves shed. If I partook in it with them then they too have a share in it, but if they committed it without me the demand should be against them. The first step of their justice should be that they pass verdict against themselves. I have my intelligence with me.

I have never mixed matters nor have they appeared mixed to me. Certainly, this is the rebellious group in which there is thenear one (az-Zubayr), the scorpion's venom (Aisha) and doubts which cast a veil (on facts). But the matter is clear and the wrong has been shaken from its foundation. Its tongue has stopped uttering mischief. By Allah, I will prepare for them a cistern from which I alone will draw water. They will not be able to drink from it nor will they be able to drink from any other place.

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[165]Here Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) points to the view of Umar bin al-Khattab which he had on the allegiance of Abu Bakr on the day of *saqifa* when he said the following: "Let me clarify this to you that the allegiance with Abu Bakr was a mistake and without thinking (*falta*) but Allah saved us from its evil. Therefore, whoever (intends to) act like this you must kill him" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 8, p.211; *As-Sira an-Nabawiyya*, Ibn Hisham, Vol. 4, pp. 308-309; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 1, p.1822; *Al-Kamil*, Ibn Al-Athir Vol. 2, p.327; *Tarikh ibn Kathir*, Vol. 5, pp.245-246; *Al-Musnad* of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, p. 255; *Al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, Vol. 3, pp. 388, 392; *Al-Ansab* by al- Baladhiri, Vol. 5, p. 15; *Al-Tamhid* by al-Baqillani, p. 196; *Sharh ibn Abul-Hadid*, Vol. 2, p. 23).

Part of the same sermon:

You advanced towards me shouting allegiance, allegiance like she-camels having delivered newly born young ones leaping towards their young. I held back my hand but you pulled it towards you. I drew back my hand but you dragged it. O Lord! These two have ignored my rights and did injustice to me. They both have broken allegiance to me and roused people against me. Unfasten You what they have fastened and do not make strong what they have woven. Show them the evil in what they aimed at and acted upon. Before fighting I asked them to be steadfast in allegiance and behaved with them with consideration but they belittled the blessing and refused (to adopt the course of safety).

Sermon 137

Referring to Future Events

He will direct desires towards (the path of) guidance while people will have turned guidance towards desires and he will turn their views to the direction of the Holy Quran while the people will have turned the Holy Quran to their views.

Part of the same sermon:

Before this Enjoiner of Allah[166], matters will deteriorate till war will rage among you with full force, showing forth its teeth, with udders full of sweet milk but with a sour tip. Beware, it will be tomorrow and the morrow will come soon with things which you do not know. The man in power, not from this crowd, will take to task all those were formerly appointed for their ill deeds and the earth will pour forth its internal treasures and fling before him easily her keys. He will show you the just way of behavior and revive the Holy Quran and Sunnah which have become lifeless (among people).

[166]This prediction of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is with regard to the appearance of the Twelfth Imam, Abul-Qasim Muhammad ibn al-Hassan, al-Mahdi (ع).

Part of the same sermon:

As if I see (him), he (the Enjoiner of Evil)[167] is shouting in Syria and is extending his banners to the outskirts of Kufa. He is bent towards it like the biting of the she-camel. He has covered the ground with heads. His mouth is wide open and (the trampling of) his footsteps on the ground have become heavy. His advance is broad and his attacks are severe.

By Allah, he will disperse you throughout the earth till only a few of you remain, like kohl in the eye. You will continue like this till the Arabs return to their sense. You should, therefore, stick to established ways, clear signs and the early period which has the lasting virtues of the Prophethood. You should know that Satan makes his ways easy so that you may follow him on his heels.

Sermon 138

On the Occasion of the Consultative Committee (After the Death of Umar Ibn al-Khattab)

No one preceded me in inviting people to truthfulness, in giving consideration to kinship and practicing generosity. So, hear my word and preserve what I say. Maybe you will see soon after today that over this matter swords will be drawn and pledges will be broken, so much so that some of you will become leaders of the people of misguidance and followers of people of ignorance.

Sermon 139

About Backbiting and Speaking Ill of Others'

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[167]This refers to Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan who came to power in Syria after his father Marwan ibn al-Hakam then after the killing of al-Mukhtar ibn Abu Ubayd ath-Thaqafi in his encounter with Mis'ab ibn az-Zubayr he proceeded towards Iraq. He clashed with Mis'ab's force at Maskin near Dayrul-Jathaliq [Catholics' Monastery] in the outskirts of Kufa. After defeating him he made a victorious entry into Kufa and took allegiance from its inhabitants. Then he sent al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi to Mecca to fight with Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr. Consequently this man besieged Mecca and stoned it and shed the blood of thousands of innocent persons like water. He killed ibn az-Zubayr and hung his body on the gallows. He perpetrated such atrocities on the people that one shudders at the thought of them.

Those who do not commit sins and have been gifted with safety (from sins) should take pity on sinners and other disobedient people. Gratitude should be mostly their indulgence and it should prevent them from (finding faults with) others. What about the backbiter who blames his brother and finds fault with him? Does he not remember that Allah has concealed the sins which he committed while they were bigger than his brother's sins pointed out by him? How can he vilify him about his sins when he has himself committed one like it? Even if he has not committed a similar sin he must have committed bigger ones. By Allah, even if he did not commit big sins but committed only small sins, his exposing the sins of people is itself a big sin.

O servants of Allah! Do not be quick in exposition anyone's sin for he may be forgiven for it and do not feel yourself safe even for a small sin because you may be punished for it. Therefore, everyone of you who comes to know the faults of others should not expose them in view of what he knows about his own faults and he should remain busy in thanks that he has been saved from what others have been indulging in.

The habit of fault finding and backbiting has become so common that even the feeling of its evilness has disappeared. And at present neither the high avoid it nor the low; neither the high status of the pulpit prevents it nor the sacredness of the mosque. Whenever a few companions sit together their topic of conversation and engaging interest is just to discuss the faults of their opponents with added color and to listen to them attentively. Although the fault-finder is himself involved in the faults which he picks up in others, yet he does not like that his own faults should be exposed. In such a case, he should have consideration for similar feelings in others and should avoid searching for their faults and hurting their feelings. He should act after the proverb: "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.

Backbiting is defined as the exposure of the fault of a brother-in-faith with the intent to vilify him in such a way as to irritate him, whether it be by speaking, acting, implication or suggestion. Some people take backbiting to cover only that which is false or contrary to fact. According to them to relate what was seen or heard, exactly as it was, is not backbiting and they say that they are not backbiting but only relating exactly what they saw or heard. But in fact backbiting is the name of this very relating of the facts because if it is not factually correct it will be false accusation and wrong blame. It is related about the Prophet (ص) that he said the following:.

Do you know what backbiting is? People said, "Allah and His Prophet (ص) know better. Then he said, "Backbiting means that you say about your brother a thing which pains him. Someone said, "But what if I say what is actually true about him? the Prophet (ص) replied, "It is backbiting only when it is factually true; otherwise, you will be accusing him falsely.

There are many causes for indulging in backbiting and because of this a man commits it sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali has recounted these causes in detail in his book Ihya' Ulumud-Din. A few of the important ones are:

1) To make fun of anyone or to make him appear abased.
2) To make people laugh and to display one's own jolliness and high spiritedness.
3) Expressing one's feelings under the influence of rage and anger.
4) To establish one's feelings under the influence of rage and anger.
5) To disprove one's connection or involvement in a matter; namely that a particular evil was not committed by oneself but by someone else.
6) To associate oneself with some group when in their company in order to avoid strangeness with them.
7) To belittle a person from whom it is feared that he will expose some fault of one's.
8) To defeat a competitor in the same calling.
9) To seek status in the audience of someone in power.
10) To express sorrow by saying it is sad and so-and-so has fallen in such and such a sin.
11) To express astonishment, for example, to say it is wonderful that so and so has done this.
12) To name the committer of an act when expressing anger over it. However, in some cases fault finding or criticizing does not fall under backbiting:.

1) If the oppressed complains of the oppressor in order to seek redress, it is not backbiting. Allah says about it:.
   Allah does not love open utterance of evil in speech except by one who has been wronged(Holy Quran, 4: 148).
2) To relate anyone's fault while giving advice is not backbiting because dishonesty and duplicity is not permissible in counseling.
3) If in connection with seeking the requirements of a religious commandment the naming of a particular individual cannot be

avoided, then to state the fault of such person to the extent necessary will not be backbiting.

4) To relate the misappropriation or dishonesty committed by someone with a view to saving a Muslim brother from harm will not be backbiting.

5) To relate the fault of someone before one who can prevent him from committing it is not backbiting.

6) Criticism and expression of opinion about a relater of traditions is not backbiting.

7) If a person is well acquainted with someone's shortcoming, then to relate such a fault in order to define his personality, for example, describing a deaf, dumb, lame or handless person as thus, is not backbiting.

8) To describe any fault of a patient before a physician for purposes of treatment is not backbiting.

9) If someone claims wrong lineage then to expose his correct lineage is not backbiting.

10) If the life, property or honor of someone can be protected only by informing him of some fault, it will not be backbiting.

11) If two persons discuss a fault of another which is already known to both it will not be backbiting, although to avoid discussing it is better, since it is possible one of the two might have forgotten it.

12) To expose the evils of one who openly commits evils is not backbiting as the tradition runs: "There is no backbiting in the case one who has torn away the veil of shamefulness."

Sermon140

Reliance on Hearsay Revisited

O people! If a person knows his brother to be steadfast in faith and of correct ways he should not lend ear to what people may say about him. Sometimes the bowman shoots arrows but the arrow goes astray; similarly talk can be off the point. Its wrong perishes, while Allah is the Hearer and the Witness. There is nothing between truth and falsehood except four fingers.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked the meaning of this whereupon he closed his fingers together and put them between his ear and eye and said the following: "It is falsehood when you say, 'I have heard so,' while it is truth when you say, 'I have seen'."

Sermon 141

Against Misplaced Generosity

He who shows generosity to those who have no claim to it or who are not fit for it will not earn anything except the praise of the ignoble and appreciation of bad persons. Although as long as he continues giving, the ignorant will say how generous his hand is, even though in the affairs of Allah he is a miser.

Therefore, to whosoever Allah gives wealth he should use it in extending good behavior to his kinsmen, in entertaining, in releasing prisoners and the afflicted; in giving to the poor and to debtors. And he should endure (the troubles arising out of) the fulfillment of rights (of others) and hardships in expectation of reward. Certainly, the achievement of these qualities is the height of greatness in this world and achievement of the distinctions of the next world, if Allah so wills.

Sermon 142

Praying for Rain

Beware; the earth which bears you and the sky which overshadows you are obedient to their Sustainer (Allah). They have not been bestowing their blessings on you for any feeling of pity on you or inclination towards you, nor for any good which they expect from you. But they were commanded to bestow benefits on you and they are obeying and were asked to maintain your good and so they are maintaining it.

Certainly, Allah tries his creatures with regard to their evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and closing the treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to turn away (from evils) may turn away, he who wishes to recall (forgotten good) may recall and he who wishes to abstain (from evil) may abstain. Allāh, the Glorified One, has made the seeking of (His) forgiveness a means for the pouring down of livelihood and mercy on the people as Allah has said the following:

Seek the forgiveness, all of you, of your Lord! Verily, He is the most forgiving, He will send (down) upon you the cloud raining in torrents and help you with wealth and sons (children). (Holy Quran, 17: 10-12).

Allah may shower mercy on him who took up repentance, gave up sins and hastened (in performing good deeds before) his death.

O Lord! we have come out to You from under the curtains and coverings (of houses) when the beasts and children are crying, seeking Your Mercy, hoping for the generosity of Your bounty and fearing Your chastisement and retribution. O Lord! give us to drink from Your rain and do not disappoint us, nor kill us by years (of drought) nor punish us for what the foolish among us have committed, O the most Merciful of all.

O Lord! We have come out to You to complain to You what is (already) not hidden from You, when the seven troubles have forced us, droughty famines have driven us, distressing wants have made us helpless and troublesome mischief has incessantly befallen us. O Lord! we beseech You not to send us back disappointed, nor to return us with down-cast eyes, nor to address us (harshly) for our sins, nor deal with us according to our deeds.

O Lord! Do pour on us Your mercy, Your blessing, Your sustenance and Your pity and make us enjoy a drink which benefits us, quenches our thirst, produces green herbage with which all that was lost gets a growing and all that had withe red comes to life again. It should bring about the benefit of freshness and plenty of ripe fruits. With it plains may be watered, rivers may begin flowing, plants may pick up foliage and prices may come down. Surely, You are powerful over whatever You wills.

Sermon 143

Deputation of the Prophet (ص)

Allah deputed prophets and distinguished them with His revelation. He made them as pleas for Him among His creation, so that there should not remain any excuse for people. He invited people to the right path through a truthful tongue. You should know that Allah fully knows creation. Not that He was not aware of what they concealed from among their hidden secrets and inner feelings, but in order to try them as to whom from among them performs good deeds, so that there is reward with regard to good deeds and chastisement with regard to evil acts.

The status of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (the Household of the Holy Prophet [ص])

Where are those who falsely and unjustly claimed that they are deeply versed in knowledge, as against us, although Allah raised us in status and kept them down, bestowed upon us knowledge but deprived them and entered us (in the fortress of knowledge) but kept them out. With us guidance is to be sought and blindness (of misguidance) is to be changed into brightness. Surely Imams (the Divine leaders) will be from the tribesmen of Quraish. They have been planted in this line through Hashim. It will not suit others nor will others be suitable as heads of affairs.

Part of the same sermon about those who are against Ahl al-Bayt (ع).

They have adopted this world and abandoned the next world; left clean water and drunk stinking water. I can almost see their wicked one1 who committed unlawful acts, associated himself with them, befriended them and accorded with them till his hair became gray and his nature acquired their tinge. He proceeded onward emitting foam like a torrential stream not caring whom he drowned, or, like fire in straw, without realizing what he burnt.

Where are the minds which seek light from the lamps of guidance and the eyes which look at minarets of piety? Where are the hearts dedicated to Allah and devoted to the obedience of Allah? they are all crowding towards worldly vanities and quarreling over unlawful issues. The ensigns of Paradise and Hell have been raised for them but they have turned their faces away from Paradise and proceeded to Hell by dint of their performances. Allah called them but they showed dislike and ran away. When Satan called them they responded and proceeded (towards him).

The reference stated above is to Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan who committed extreme atrocities through his officer al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi.

Sermon 144

About this World

O people! You are, in this world, the target for the arrows of death. With every drinking there is choking and with every eating there is suffocation. You do not get any benefit in it except by foregoing another (benefit) and no one among you advances in age by a day except by the taking away of a day from his life. Nothing more is added to his eating unless it reduces what was there before. No mark appears for him unless a mark disappears. Nothing new comes into being unless the new becomes old. No new crop comes up unless a crop has been reaped. Those roots are gone whose off-shoots we are. How can an off-shoot live after the departure of its root?

Part of the same sermon: on Innovation (bid'a):.

No innovation is introduced unless one Sunnah is forsaken, keep away from innovations and stick to the broad road. Surely the old tested ways are he best and the innovated ones are bad.

Sermon 145

Delivered When Umar Ibn al-Khattab Consulted Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about Taking Part in the Battle of Then Persia.

Victory or defeat is not dependent on the small or the large number of forces. It is Allah's religion which He has raised above all faiths and His army which He has mobilized and extended, till it has reached the point where it stands now and has arrived its present positions. We hold a promise from Allah and He will fulfil His promise and support His army.

The status of the head of government is that of the thread for beads, as it connects them and keeps them together. If the thread is broken, they will disperse and be lost and will never come together again. The Arabs today, even though small in number are big because of Islam and strong because of unity. You should remain like the axis for them and rotate the mill (of government) with (the help of) the Arabs and be their root. Avoid battle because if you leave this place the Arabs will attack you from all sides and directions till the unguarded places left behind by you will become more important than those before you.

If the Persians see you tomorrow they will say, "He is the root (chief) of Arabia. If we do away with him we will be in peace. In this way this will heighten their eagerness against you and their keenness to aim at

you. You say that they have set out to fight against the Muslims. Well, Allah detests their setting out more than you do and He is more capable of preventing what He detests. As regarding your idea about their (large) number, in the past we did not fight on the strength of large numbers but we fought on the basis of Allah's support and assistance."

When some people advised Umar to partake in the battle of Qadisiyya or Nahawand, he found it against his personal inclination, so he though it necessary to consult Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). This way, if the Imam (ع) advised him against it, he would plead to others to stay back based on Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's advice. But if the Imam (ع) advised him to participate in the battle, some other excuse would be found. However, unlike others, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) advised him to stay. Other people had advised him to join in fighting because the Holy Prophet (ص) did not send only others to fight but took part in it himself as well, keeping his close relations also with him. What Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had in view was that Omer's presence in the battle could not be beneficial to Islam, but rather his staying back will save the Muslims from dispersion.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's view that Athe status of the head of government is that of the axis around which the system of the government rotates is a point of principle and does not concern any particular personality. whether the ruler is a Muslim or an unbeliever, just or despotic, virtuous or vicious, for the administration of the state his presence is a necessity, as Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has explained elsewhere at greater length:.

The fact is that there is no escape for men from a ruler, good or bad. Faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. During the rule, Allah will carry everything to its end. Through the ruler tax is collected, the enemy is fought, roads are protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoy peace and are allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked. (Sermon 40).

The words which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered in his advice are not indicative of any quality of Umar except his being the ruler. There is no doubt that he held worldly authority, irrespective of the question of whether it was secured in the right way or wrong way. And where there is authority there is centering of people's affairs. That is why

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said that if Umar will go out the Arabs will follow him in large numbers towards the battlefield because when the ruler is on the march the people will not like to stay behind. The result of their going will be that city after city will become vacant, while the enemy will infer from their reaching the battlefield that the Islamic cities are lying vacant and that if these people were repulsed no assistance will reach the Muslims from the center. Again, if the ruler were killed the army will disperse automatically because the ruler is as its foundation. When the foundation is shaken the walls cannot remain standing. The word Aslul-Arab (the root chief) of Arabia has not been used by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as his own but he has taken it from the Persians. Obviously in his capacity as the head of the State, Umar was, in their view, the chief of Arabia. Besides, the reference is to the country, not to Islam or Muslims, so that there is no suggestion of any importance for him from the Islamic point of view.

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) pointed out to Umar that on his reaching there the Persians will aim at him and that if he fell into their hands they will not spare him without killing, although such words will have touched the brave to the quick and will have heightened their spirits, `Umar liked the advice to stay back and thought it better to keep himself away from the flames of battle. If this advice had not been in accord with his personal inclination he will not have received it so heartily and will have tried to argue that the administration of the country could be maintained by leaving a deputy. Again when other people had already advised him to go out, what was the need for consulting Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) except to get an excuse to stay back.

Sermon 146

The Purpose of the Deputation of the Holy Prophet (ص) and the Condition of the Time When People Will Go Against the Holy Quran :.

Allah deputed Muhammad (ص) with Truth so that he may take out His people from the worship of idols towards His worship and from obeying Satan towards obeying Him and sent him with the Holy Quran which He explained and made strong, in order that the people may know their Sustainer (Allah) since they were ignorant of Him, may acknowledge Him since they were denying Him and accept Him since they were refusing (to believe in) Him. Because He the Glorified One,

revealed Himself to them through His Book without their having seen Him, by means of what He showed them out of His might and made them fear His sway. How He destroyed those whom He wished to destroy through His chastisement and ruined those whom He wished to ruin through His retribution!

On the Future

Certainly, a time will come upon you after me when nothing will be more concealed than rightfulness, nothing more apparent than wrongfulness - and nothing more current than untruth against Allah and His Prophet (ص). For the people of this period nothing will be more valueless than the Holy Quran being recited as it ought to be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Holy Quran being misplaced from its status. And in the towns nothing will be more hated than virtue, nor anything more acceptable than vice.

The holders of the book will throw it away and those who memorize it will forget it. In these days the Holy Quran and its people will be exiled and expelled. They will be companions keeping together on one path, but no one will offer them asylum. Consequently at this time the Holy Quran and its people will be among the people but not among them, will be with them but not with them because misguidance cannot accord with guidance even though they may be together. The people will have united on division and will, therefore, have cut away from the community, as though they were the leaders of the Holy Quran and not the Holy Quran their leader. Nothing of it will be left with them except its name and they will know nothing save its writing and its words. Before that, they will inflict hardships on the virtuous, naming the latter's truthful views about Allah false allegations and enforcing for virtues the punishment of the vice.

Those before you passed away because of the lengthening of their desires and the forgetting of their death, till that promised event befell them about which excuses are turned down, repentance is denied and punishment and retribution is inflicted.

About Ahl al-Bayt (ع)

O people! He who seeks counsel from Allah secures guidance and he who adopts His word as guide is led towards what is more straight because Allah's lover feels secure and His opponent feels afraid. It does

not behoove one who knows His greatness to assume greatness, but the greatness of those who know His greatness is that they should know before Him and the safety for those who know what His power is lies in submitting to Him. Do not be scared away from the truth like the scaring of the healthy from the scabbed person, or the sound person from the sick.

You should know that you will never know guidance unless you know who has abandoned it, you will never abide by the pledges of the Holy Quran unless you know who has broken them and will never cling to it unless you know who has forsaken it. Seek these things from those who own them because they are the life spring of knowledge and death of ignorance. They are the people whose commands will disclose to you their (extent of) knowledge, their silence will disclose their (capacity of) speaking and their outer appearance will disclose their inner self. They do not go against religion and do not differ from one other about it, while it is among them a truthful witness and a silent speaker.

Sermon 147

About Talhah and az-Zubayr and the People of Basra

Both of these men (Talhah and az-Zubayr) wish the Caliphate for himself and is drawing towards himself as against the other fellow. They do not employ any connection for getting access to Allah nor proceed towards Him through any means. Both of them bear malice against the other. Shortly his veil over it will be uncovered. But Allah, if they achieve what they aim at, one of them will kill the other and one will finish the other. The rebellious party has stood u, p. Where are the seekers of virtue; for the paths have already been determined and they have been given thenews. For every misguidance there is a cause and for every break of pledge there is a misrepresentation. By Allah, I shall not be like him who listens to the voice of mourning, hears the man who brings news of death and also visits themourner yet does not take lesson.

Sermon 148

Before His Passing Away (Last Will)

O people! Everyone has to meet what he wishes to avoid by running away.[168] Death is the place to which life is driving. To run away from it means to catch it. How many days did I spent in searching for the secret of this matter, but Allah did not allow save its concealment. Alas! It is a treasured knowledge. As for my last will, it is that concerning Allah, do not believe in a partner for Him and concerning Muhammad (ص), do not disregard his Sunnah. Keep these two pillars and burn these two lamps. Till you are not divided, no evil will come to you.[169] Everyone of you has to bear his own burden. It has been kept light for the ignorant. Allah is Merciful. Faith is straight. The leader (Prophet [ص]) is the holder of knowledge. Yesterday I was with you; today I have become the object of a lesson for you, and tomorrow I shall leave you. Allah may forgive me and you.

If the foot remains firm in this slippery place, well and good. But if the foot slips, This is so because we are under the shade of branches, the passing of the winds and the canopy of the clouds whose layers are dispersed in the sky and whose traces disappeared[170] in the earth. I was your neighbor. My body kept you company for some days and shortly you will find just an empty body of mine which will be stationary after (all its) movement and silent after speech so that my calmness, the closing of my eyes and the stillness of my limbs may provide you counsel because it is more of a counsel for those who learn a lesson (from it) than eloquent speech and a ready word. I am departing from you like one who is eager to meet (someone). Tomorrow you will look at my days, then my inner side will be disclosed to you and you will understand me after the vacation of my place and its occupation by someone else.

Sermon 149

About Future Events and Some Activities of the Hypocrites

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[168]This means that during all the time spent in the attempts that a man makes to avoid death and in the means he adopts for it, it is only the span of life that is shortened. As the time passes the objective of death approaches near, so much as that in one's attempt to seek life one meets death.

[169]*Awa khalakum dhammun* (No evil will come to you). This sentence is used as a proverb. It was first employed by Qasir, slave of Khazimah ibn Malik al-Abrash.

[170]The intention is that when all these things die, how can those who inhabit them remain safe? Certainly they too, like everything else, have to pass away some day or other. Then why should there be any wonder at my life coming to an end?

They took to the right and the left piercing through to the ways of evil and leaving the paths of guidance. Do not make haste for a matter which is to happen and is awaited and do not wish for delay in what the morrow is to bring for you. For, how many people make haste for a matter, but when they get it they begin to wish they had not got it. How near is today to the dawning of tomorrow. O my people, this is the time for the occurrence of every promised event and the approach of things which you do not know. Whoever from among us will be during these days will move through them with a burning lamp and will tread on the footsteps of the virtuous, in order to unfasten knots, to free slates, to divide the united and to unite the divided. He will be in concealment from people. The stalker will not find his footprints even though he pursues with his eye. Then a group of people will be sharpened like the sharpening of swords by the blacksmith. Their sight will be brightened by revelation, the (delicacies of) commentary will be put in their ears and they will be given drinks of wisdom, morning and evening.

Part of the same sermon:

Their period became long in order that they might complete (their status of) disgrace and deserve vicissitudes, till the end of the period was reached and a group of people turned towards mischief and picked up their arms for fighting. The virtuous did not show any obligation to Allah but calmly endured and did not feel elated for having engaged themselves in truthfulness. Eventually the period of trial came to an end according to what was ordained. Then they propagated their good views among others and sought nearness to Allah according to the command of their leader.

When Allah took the Prophet (ص) (to himself) a group of men went back on their tracks. The ways (of misguidance) ruined them and they placed trust in deceitful intriguers, showed consideration to other than kinsmen, abandoned the kin whom they had been ordered to love and shifted the building from its strong foundation and built it in other than its (proper) place. They are the source of every shortcoming and the door of gropes in the dark. They were moving to and fro in amazement and lay intoxicated in the way of the people of the Pharaohs. They were either bent on this world and taking support on it or away from the fait and removed from it.

Sermon 150

The Condition of the People During Disorder and Advice Against Oppression and Unlawful Earning

I praise Allah and seek His help from (what led to the) punishment of Satan and his deceitful acts and (I seek His) protection from Satan's traps and way-layings. I testify that there is no god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and His Prophet (ص) - peace be upon him and his progeny - and his chosen and his selected one. Muhammad's distinction cannot be paralleled nor can his loss be made good. Populated places were brightened through him when previously there was dark misguidance, overpowering ignorance and rude habits and people regarded unlawful as lawful, humiliated the man of wisdom, passed lives when there were no prophets and died as unbelievers.

You, O people of Arabia, will be victims of calamities which have come near. You should avoid the intoxication of wealth, fear the disasters of chastisement, keep steadfast in the darkness and crookedness of mischief when its hidden nature discloses itself, its secrets become manifest and its axis and the pivot of its rotation gain strength. It begins in imperceptible stages but develops into great hideousness. Its youth is like the youth of an adolescent and its marks are like the marks of beating by stone.

Oppressors inherit it by (mutual) agreement. The first of them serves as a leader for the latter one and the latter one follows the first one. They vie with each other in (the matter of) this lowly world and leap over this stinking carcass. Shortly the follower will denounce his connection with the leader and the leader with the follower. They will disunite on account of mutual and curse one another when they meet. Then after this there will appear another arouser of mischief who will destroy ruined things. The heart will become wavering after being normal, men will be misled after safety, desires will multiply and become diversified and views will become confused.

Whoever proceeds towards this mischief will be ruined and whoever strives for it will be annihilated. They will be biting each other during it as the wild asses bite each other in the herd. The coils of the rope will be disturbed and the face of affairs will be blinded. During it sagacity will be on the ebb and the oppressors will (get the opportunity to) speak. Themischief will smash the Bedouins with its hammers and crush them

with its chest. In its dust the single marchers will be lost and in its way the horsemen will be destroyed. It will approach with the bitterness of destiny and will give pure blood (instead of milk). It will breach the minarets of faith and shatter the ties of firm belief. The wise will run away from it while the wicked will foster it. It will thunder and flash (like lightning). It will create a severe disaster. In it kinship will be forsaken and Islam will be abandoned. He who declaims it will also be affected by it and he who flees from it will (be forced to) stay in it.

Part of the same sermon:

Among them some will be un-avenged martyrs and some will be stricken with fear and seek protection. They will be deceived by pledges and fraudulent belief. You should not become landmarks of mischief and signs of innovations but should adhere to that on which the rope of the community has been wound and on which the pillars of obedience have been founded. Proceed towards Allah as oppressed and do not proceed to Him as oppressors. Avoid the paths of Satan and the places of rebellion. Do not put in your bellies unlawful morsels because you are facing the One Who has made disobedience unlawful for you and made the path of obedience easy for you.

Sermon 151

About the greatness and the attributes of Allah

Praise be to Allah Who is proof of His existence through His creation, of His being external through the newness of His creation and through their mutual similarities of the fact that nothing is similar to Him. Senses cannot touch Him and curtains cannot veil Him because of the difference between the maker and the made, the Limiter and the limited and the Sustainer and the sustained.

He is One but not by the first in counting, is Creator but not through activity or labor, is Hearer but not by means of any physical organ, is Looker but not by a stretching of eyelids, is Witness but not by nearness, is Distinct but not by measurement of distances, is Manifest but not by seeing and is Hidden but not by subtlety (of body). He is Distinct from things because He overpowers them and exercises might over them, while things are distinct from Him because of their subjugation to Him and their turning towards Him.

He who describes Him limits Him. He who limits Him numbers Him. He who numbers Him rejects His eternity. He who asks "How?" seeks a description for Him. He who asks "Where?" limits Him. He is the One Who knows everything. He is the Sustainer even though there be nothing to be sustained. He is the Powerful One even though there is nothing to be overpowered.

Part of the same sermon about the Divine leaders (Imams)

The riser has risen, the sparkler has sparkled, the what appears has appeared and the curved has been straightened. Allah has replaced one people with another and one day with another. We awaited these changes as the famine-stricken await the rain. Certainly the Imams are the vicegerents of Allah over His creatures and they make the creatures know Allah. No one will enter Paradise except he who knows them and knows Him and no one will enter Hell except he who denies them and denies Him.

Allah, the most Glorified One, has distinguished you with Islam and has chosen you for it. This is so because it is the name of safety and the collection of honor. Allah, the most Glorified One, chose its way and disclosed its pleas through open knowledge and secret maxims. Its (Holy Quran) wonders are not exhausted and its delicacies do not end. It contains blossoming bounties and lamps of darkness. (The doors of) virtues cannot be opened save with its keys, nor can gloom be dispelled save with its lamps. Allah has protected its inaccessible points (from enemies) and allowed grazing (to its followers) in its pastures. It contains cover (from the ailment of misguidance) for the seeker of cure and full support for the seeker of support.

The first part of this sermon consists of important issues concerning the science of knowledge about Allah, wherein Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has thrown light on the matter that Allah is forever and His attributes are the same as He Himself. When we cast a glance at creation, we see that for every movement there is a mover, from which every man of ordinary wisdom is compelled to conclude that no effect can appear without a cause, so much so, that even an infant a few days old, when his body is touched, feels in the depth of his consciousness that someone has touched him. He indicates it by opening his eyes or turning and looking. How then can the creation of the world and the system of all creation be arranged without a Creator or Organizer? Once it is necessary to believe in a Creator, then He should exist by Himself because everything which has a beginning must have a center of existence from which it should

terminate. If that too needed a creator, there will be the question of whether this creator is also the creation of some other creator or exists by itself. Thus unless a Self-created Creator is believed in, who should be the cause of all causes, the mind will remain groping in the unending labyrinth of cause and effect and never attain the idea of the last extremity of the series of creation. It will fall into the fallacy of circular arguing and will not reach any end. If the creator were taken to have created himself, then there will be (one of the two positions, namely) either he should be non-existent or existent. If he were not existent, then it will not be possible for something non-existent to create any existent being. If he were existent before creating himself, there will be no sense in coming into being again, therefore, it is necessary to believe that the Creator should be a Being not dependent on any other creator for His own existence and everything else should be dependent on Him. This dependence of the entire creation is a proof that the existence of the Source of all creation is from ever and eternal. And since all beings other than He are subject to change, are dependent on status and place and are similar to one another in qualities and properties and since similarity leads to plurality whereas unity has no like save itself, therefore, nothing can be like Him. Even things called one cannot be reckoned after His Unity because He is One and Singular in every respect. He is free and pure from all those attributes which are found in body or matter because He is neither body, nor color, nor shape, nor does He lie in any direction, nor is He bounded within some place or locality. Therefore, man cannot see or understand Him through his senses or feelings because senses can know only those things which accord with the limitations of time, place and matter. To believe that He can be seen is to believe that He has body, but since He is not a body and He does not exist through a body and He does not lie in any direction or place, there is no question of His being seen. But His being unseen is not like that of subtle material bodies, due to whose delicacy the eye pierces through them and eyes remain unable to see them; as for example the wind in the vast firmament. But He is the unseen by His very existence. Nevertheless, nothing is unseen for Him. He sees as well as hears, but is not dependent on instruments of seeing or hearing because if He were in need of organs of the body for hearing and seeing He will be in need of external things for His perfection and will not be a perfect Being, whereas He should be perfect in all respects and no attribute of perfection should be apart from His Self. To believe in attributes separately from His Self will mean that there will be a self and a few attributes and the compound of the self and the attributes will be Allah. But a thing which is compounded is dependent on its parts and these parts must exist before their composition into the whole. When the parts exist from before, how can the whole be from ever and eternal

because its existence is later than that of its parts. But Allah had the attributes of knowledge, power and sustaining even when nothing was existent because none of His attributes were created in Him from outside, but His attributes are His Self and His Self is His attributes. Consequently, His knowledge does not depend on the object of knowledge existing first then His knowledge because His Self is prior to things coming into existence. Nor is it necessary for His power that there should first exist the object to be over-powered then alone He will be called Powerful because Powerful is that who has power equally for doing or abandoning and as such the existence of the object to be over-powered is not necessary. Similarly Sustainer means master. Just as He is the master of thenon-existent after its coming into existence, in the same way He has power to bring it into existence from non-existence, namely if He so wills He may bestow existence upon it.

Sermon 152

About Negligent Persons and the Characteristics of Beasts, Carnivores and Women

He has been allowed time by Allah. He is falling into error along with negligent persons and goes early in the morning with the sinners, without any road to lead or any Imam to guide.

Part of the same sermon:

At last, when Allah will make clear to them the reward for their sins and take them out from the veils of their neglectfulness, they will proceed to what they were running away from and run away from what they were proceeding to. They will not benefit from the wants they will satisfy or the desires they will fulfil.

I warn you and my own self from this situation. A man should derive benefit from his own self. Certainly, prudent is he who hears and ponders over it, who sees and observes and who benefits from instructive material then treads on clear paths wherein he avoids falling into hollows and straying into pitfalls and does not assist those who misguide him by turning away from truthfulness, changing his words or fearing truth.

O my listener! Be cured from your intoxication, wake up from your slumber, decrease your hasty activity and ponder over what has

come to you through the Holy Prophet (ص), the Ummi[171] which is inevitable and inescapable. You should turn away from him who opposes him and leave him and leave whatever he has adopted for himself. Put off your vanity, drop your haughtiness and recall your grave because your way passes over it. You will be dealt with as you deal with others, you will reap what you sow and what you send today will meet you tomorrow. So provide for your future and send (some good deeds) for your day (of reckoning). Fear, fear, O listener! Act, act, O careless one! No one will warn you like him who knows.

One of the firm decisions of Allah in the Wise Reminder (Holy Quran) upon which He bestows reward or gives punishment and through which He likes or dislikes is that it will not benefit a man, even though he exerts himself and acts sincerely if he leaves this world to meet Allah with one of these acts without repenting, namely that he believed in a partner with Allah during his obligatory worship, or appeased his own anger by killing an individual, or spoke about acts committed by others, or sought fulfillment of his needs from people by introducing an innovation in his religion, or met people with a double face, or moved among them with a double tongue. Understand this because an illustration is a guide for its like.

Beasts are concerned with their bellies. Carnivores are concerned with assaulting others. Women are concerned with the adornments of this ignoble life and the creation of mischief herein.[172] Ibn Abul-Hadid

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[171]The word *Ummi* has been used in the Holy Quran with reference to the Holy Prophet (ص) in 7: 157-158. For better understanding of the word, refer to the books of commentary on the Holy Quran.

[172]The intention is to say that the cause of all mischief and evil is the passion to satisfy bodily needs and the passion to subdue. If a human being is subjugated by the passion to satisfy bodily needs and considers filling the stomach as his aim there will be no difference between him and a beast because a beast too has no aim except to fill its belly. But if he is over-powered by the passion to subdue others and takes to killing and devastation there will be no difference between him and a carnivorous beast because the latter's aim is also tearing and devouring. If both the passions are at work in him then he is like a woman because in a woman both these passions act side by side and because of this she is extremely eager of adornment and is active in fanning mischief and disturbance. However, a true believer will never agree to adopt these habits as his mode of behavior, rather he keeps his passions suppressed so that he neither allows pride and vanity to approach near him nor does he fan mischief or disturbance for fear of Allah.

has written that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon at the time of marching towards Basra and since the trouble of Basra was the result of a woman's instigation. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has, after mentioning beasts and carnivore, held a woman also to possess such qualities. Thus the battle of Basra was the result of these qualities, whereby thousands of persons were involved in death and destruction.

(On the other hand) believers are humble, believers are admonishers and believers are afraid (of Allah).

Sermon 153

About Ahl al-Bayt (ع) and their Opponents

He who has an intelligent mind looks to his goal. He knows his low road as well as his high road. The caller has called. The shepherd has tended (his flocks). So respond to the caller and follow the shepherd.

Those who oppose have entered the oceans of disturbance and have taken to innovations instead of the Sunnah (the Prophet's holy deeds, utterances and his unspoken approvals), while the believers have sunk down and the misguided and the liars are speaking. We are the near ones, companions, treasure holders and doors (to the Sunnah). Houses are not entered save through their doors. Whoever enters them from other than the door is called a thief.

Part of the same sermon:

The delights of the Holy Quran are about them (Ahl al-Bayt [ع], descendants of the Prophet [ص]). They are the treasurers of Allah. When they speak, they tell the truth, but when they keep quiet, no one can speak unless they speak. The forerunner should report correctly to his people, should retain his wits and should be one of the children (a man) of the next world because he has come from there and will return to it.

The beginning of the action of one who sees with the heart and acts with the eyes is to assess whether the action will go against him or for him. If it is for him he indulges in it, but if it is against him he keeps away from it. For, he who acts without knowledge is like one who treads without a path. Then his deviation from the path keeps him at a distance from his aim. And he who acts according to knowledge is like he who

treads the clear path. Therefore, he who can see should see whether he should proceed or return.

You should also know that the outside (of everything) has a similar inside. Of whatever the outside is good, its inside too is good and whatever the outside is bad, its inside too is bad. The truthful Prophet (ص) has said that: "Allah may love a man but hate his action and may love the action but hate the man. You should also know that every action is like vegetation and vegetation cannot do without water while waters are different. So where the water is good the plant is good and its fruits are sweet, whereas where the water is bad, the plant will also be bad and its fruits will be bitter.

Sermon 154

About the Wonderful Creation of the Bat

Praise to Allah Who is such that it is not possible to describe the reality of knowledge about Him, since His greatness has restrained the intellects and, therefore, they cannot find the way to approach the extremity of His realm. He is Allah, the True, the manifester of Truth. He is more True and more Manifest than eyes can see. Intellects cannot comprehend Him by fixing limits for Him since in that case to Him will be to attribute shape. Imagination cannot catch Him by fixing quantities for Him for in that case to Him will be attributed body. He created creatures without any example and without the advice of a counsel, or the assistance of a helper. His creation was completed by His command and bowed to His obedience. It responded (to Him) and did not defy (Him). It obeyed and did not resist.

An example of His delicate production, wonderful creation and deep sagacity which He has shown us is found in these bats which keep hidden in the daylight although daylight reveals everything else and are mobile in thenight although thenight shuts up every other living being, and how their eyes get dazzled and cannot make use of the light of the sun so as to be guided in their movements and so as to reach their known places through the direction provided by the sun.

Allah has prevented them from moving in the brightness of the sun and confined them to their places of hiding instead of going out at the time of its shining. Consequently they keep their eyelids down in the day and treat night as a lamp and go with its help in search of their livelihood.

The darkness of night does not obstruct their sight nor does the gloom of darkness prevent them from movement. As soon as the sun removes its veil and the light of morning appears and the rays of its light enter upon the lizards in their holes, the bats pull down their eyelids on their eyes and live on what they had collected in the darkness of thenight. Glorified is He who has made thenight as day for them to seek livelihood and made the day for rest and stay.

He has given them wings of flesh with which, at the time of need, they rise upwards for flying. They look like the ends of ears without feathers or bones. Of course, you can see the veins quite distinctly. They have two wings which are neither too thin so that get turned in flying, nor too thick so that they prove heavy. When they fly their young ones hold on to them and seek refuge with them, getting down when they get down and rising up when they rise. The young does not leave them till its limbs become strong, its wings can support it for rising and it begins to recognize its places of living and its interest. Glorified is He who creates everything without any previous sample by someone else.

Sermon 155

About the Malice Borne by Aisha, and Warning the People of Basra about What Was to Occur

Whoever can at this time keep himself clinging to Allah should do so. If you follow me I shall certainly carry you, if Allah so wills, on the path of Paradise, even though it may be full of severe hardship and of bitter taste.

As regarding a certain woman, she is in the grip of womanly views and malice is boiling in her bosom like the furnace of the blacksmith. If she were called upon to deal with others as she is dealing with me she will not have done it. (As for me), even hereafter she will be allowed her original respect, while the reckoning (of her misdeeds) is an obligation of Allah.

Part of the same sermon:

This path is the lightest course and the brightest lamp. Guidance towards virtuous actions is sought through faith while guidance towards faith is achieved through virtuous actions. Knowledge is made to prosper through faith and death is feared because of knowledge. This world comes

to an end with death, while the next world is secured (by virtuous actions) in this world. For people there is no escape from resurrection. They are heading for this last end in its appointed course.

Part of the same sermon:

They have got up from the resting places in their graves and have set off for the final objectives. Every house has its own people. They are not changed nor shifted from the re. Commanding for good and refraining from evil are two characteristics of Allah, the Glorified. They can neither bring death near nor lessen sustenance.

You should adhere to the Book of Allah because it is the strong rope, a clear light, a benefiting cure, a quenching for thirst, protection for the adherent and deliverance for the attached. It does not curve so as to need straightening and does not deflect so as to be corrected. Frequency of its repetition and its falling on ears does not make it old. Whoever speaks according to it, speaks truth and whoever acts by it is forward (in action).

A man stood up and said the following: "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! Tell us about this disturbance and whether you inquired about it from the Holy Prophet (ص)." Thereupon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

When Allah, the Glorified sent down the verse: "Aleef laam meem (A.L.M.) What?! Do people imagine that they will be let off on (their) saying: 'We believe!' and they will not be tried?!" (Holy Quran, 29: 1-2), I came to know that the disturbance will not befall us so long as the Prophet (ص) is among us. So I said, "O Prophet of Allah (ص)! What is this disturbance of which Allah, the Sublime, has informed you?" He replied, "O Ali! My people will create trouble after me." I said, "O Prophet of Allah (ص)! On the day of Uhud, when people had fallen martyrs and I was not among them, and this had been very much annoying me, did you not say to me, `Cheer up, for martyrdom is yours later on'?" The Prophet (ص) replied, "Yes it is so, but what about you enduring the present?" I said, "O Prophet of Allah (ص)! This is not an occasion for endurance, but rather an occasion for cheering up and gratitude." Then he said the following: "O Ali (ع)! People will fall into mischief through their wealth, will show obligation to Allah on account of their faith, will expect His mercy, will feel safe from His anger and regard

His unlawful matters as lawful by raising false doubts and by their misguiding desires. They will then hold lawful (the use of) wine by calling it barley water, a bribe by calling it a gift and taking of usurious interest by calling it sale." I said, "O Prophet of Allah (ص)! How should I deal with them at the time, whether to hold them to have gone back in heresy or just in rebellion?" He said, "In rebellion."

There is no denying the fact that Aisha's behavior towards Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was throughout inimical and very often her heart's turbidity expressed itself on her face and her hatred and dislike became quite apparent, so much so that if in connection with some affair Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's name came up a frown appeared on her forehead and she did not relish pronouncing it with her tongue. For example, when Ubaydullah ibn `Abdillah ibn `Utbah mentioned to Abdullah ibn Abbas thenarration by Aisha namely that Ain his death-illness the Prophet (ص), taking support on al-Fadl ibn Abbas and another person, came to her (Aisha's) house, Abdullah ibn Abbas said the following: "Do you know who this Other man' was?" He said, "No." Then he said, "Ali (ع) ibn Abu Talib, but she is averse to name him in a good context" (Ahmed ibn Hanbal Al-Musnad, Vol. 6, pp. 34, 228; Ibn Sa`d, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Vol. 2, part 2, p. 29 al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 1, pp. 1800-1801. Al-Baladhiri, Ansab al-Ashraf, Vol. 1, pp. 544-545; al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 3, p. 396).

One cause for this hatred and malice was the presence of Hadrat Fatima (ع) whose wholesome dignity and esteem pricked her heart like a thorn. Her jealousy towards the other wives (of the Prophet (ص)) did not allow her to let the Prophet (ص) love the daughter of his other wife to such a degree that he should stand on her approach, seat her in his own place, declare her most honorable of all the women of the world and bear such love towards her children as to call them his own sons. All these things pained her much and naturally her feelings on such an occasion were that if she had borne children they will have been the Prophet's sons and they will have been the pivot of the Prophet's affection instead of Imām Hassan and Imam Hussain. But she was not gifted with any issue and she gratified her own desire to be a mother by adopting the surname of Umm Abdillah (mother of the slave of Allah) after her sister's son. In short all these things created the passion of hatred in her heart, as a result of which she off and on complained to the Prophet (ص) against Fatima (ع) but could not succeed in diverting the Prophet's attention from her. News about this mortification and estrangement also reached the ears of Abu

Bakr. That will only perturb him as he too could do nothing, except that his verbal sympathies were with his daughter. At last the Prophet (ص) left this world and the reins of Government fell into Abu Bakr's hands. Now was the opportunity for him to avenge as best as he could and to perpetrate whatever violence he had in mind. Consequently, the first step he took was that, in order to deprive Fatima (ع) of inheritance, he denied the principle of inheritance in the case of the prophets and held that neither do the prophets inherit nor are they inherited, but the property left by them belongs to the State. Fatima (ع) was so affected that she gave up speaking to him and passed away from this world with these very feelings. Aisha did not even take the trouble to express any sorrow at her tragic death. Thus ibn Abul-Hadid has written.

When Fatima (ع) expired all the wives of the Prophet (ص) came to Banu Hashim in condolence except Aisha. She did not come and showed herself sick and words from her reached Ali which displayed her joy. (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, p. 198, Vol. 9).

As long as she bore so much malice against Fatima (ع), how could Fatima's spouse be spared similar enmity and malice. Particularly when such events also occurred which worked like a fan and roused her feeling of hatred, such as the incident of ifk when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to the Prophet (ص): "She is no better than the buckles of your shoe, leave her and divorce her. On hearing this Aisha must have felt miserable in her bed and must have developed the severest feeling of hatred against him. There were also moments when distinction was conferred on Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in preference to Abu Bakr. For instance, in connection with the dispatch of the Quranic verses on Bara'ah (innocence), the Prophet (ص) removed Abu Bakr from the job, recalled him and assigned it to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saying that he had been commanded by Allāh to take it himself or send it through a member of his family. Similarly the Prophet (ص) closed all the doors opening into the mosque including that of Abu Bakr but allowed the door of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's house to continue to open.

Aisha could not relish Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's distinction over her father and whenever there was any occasion for such distinction she did her best to undo it. When in his last days the Prophet (ص) ordered the contingent under Usamah ibn Zayd to march and ordered Abu Bakr and Umar also to go under his command, they received a message from the

wives of the Prophet (ص) that his condition was serious and, therefore, the contingent should come back instead of proceeding further. This was because their far-reaching sight had realized that their only purpose in getting Medina vacated by the Muhajirun and the Ansar could be that after the death of the Prophet (ص) no one should stand in Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's way and that he should get the caliphate without any trouble. On receipt of this message the contingent under Usamah came back. When the Prophet (ص) learned this he again ordered Usamah to march with the contingent and even said, "Allah may curse him who keeps away from the contingent, whereupon they again set off, but they were again called back till the Prophet's illness assumed serious proportions, but Usamah's contingent did not go out as it did not want to. After this Abu Bakr was sent word through Bilal that he should deputize the Prophet (ص) in leading the prayers in order to pave the way for his Caliphate. Accordingly keeping this in view he was first shown as the Prophet's caliph (deputy) in prayers and eventually was accepted as his caliph for all purposes. Thereafter matters were so contrived that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) could not get the Caliphate. However, after the reign of the third caliph circumstances took such a turn that people were obliged to swear the oath of allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's hand. On this occasion Aisha was present in Mecca. When she learned about Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's caliphate her eyes began emitting flames and rage and anger perturbed her mind and her hatred for Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) assumed such seriousness that she rose against him on the excuse of avenging blood of the same man (Othman) whom she had herself proclaimed fit to be killed and openly declared war as a result of which so much bloodshed occurred that the whole land of Basra was smeared with the blood of those killed and the door of disunity was opened for good, according to Sharh, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 9, pp. 190-200.

Sermon 156

Urging People Towards Piety (Taqwa)

Praise be to Allah Who made praise the key for His remembrance, a means for an increase of His bounty and a guide for His Attributes and Dignity.

O servants of Allah! Time will deal with the survivors just as it dealt with those gone by. The time that has passed will not return and whatever there is in it will not stay for ever. Its later deeds are the same as

the former ones. Its trouble try to excel one another. Its banners follow each other. It is as though you are attached to the last day which is driving you as rapidly as are driven the she-camels which are dry for seven months. He who busies himself with things other than improvement of his own self becomes perplexed in darkness and entangled in ruination. His evil spirits immerse him deep in vices and make his bad actions appear handsome. Paradise is the end of those who are forward (in good deeds) and Hell is the end of those who commit excesses.

Know O servants of Allah! that piety is a strong house of protection while impiety is a weak house which does not protect its people and does not give security to him who takes refuge the rein. Be informed that the sting of sins is cut by piety and the final aim is achieved by conviction of belief.

O servants of Allah! (fear) Allah, (fear) Allah, in the matter of your own selves, which are the most beloved and dear to you because Allah has clarified to you the way of truthfulness and has lit its paths. So (you may choose) either ever-present misfortune or eternal happiness. You should, therefore, provide in these mortal days for the eternal days. You have been informed of the provision, ordered to march and told to make haste in setting off. You are like staying riders who do not know when they will be ordered to march on. Beware, what will he, who has been created for the next world, do with this world? What will a person do with wealth which he will shortly be deprived of while only its ill effects and reckoning will be left behind for him?

O servants of Allah! the good which Allah has promised should not be abandoned and the evil from which He has refrained should not be coveted. O servants of Allah! fear the day when actions will be reckoned; there will be much quaking and even children will get old.

Be informed, O servants of Allah! that your own self is a guard over you; limbs are watchmen and truthful vigil-keepers who preserve (the record of) your actions and the numbers of your breaths. The gloom of the dark night cannot conceal you from them, nor can closed doors hide you from them. Surely tomorrow is close to today.

Today will depart with all that is has and tomorrow will come in its wake. It is as though everyone of you has reached that place on earth where he will be alone, namely the location of his grave. So, what to say of the lonely house, the solitary place of staying and the solitary exile. It is as though the cry(of the Horn) has reached you, the Hour has overtaken

you and you have come out (of your graves) for the passing of judgement. (The curtains of) falsehood have been removed from you and your excuses have become weak. The truth about you has been proved. All your matters have proceeded to their consequences. Therefore, you should (now) take counsel from examples, learn lessons from vicissitudes and take advantage of those who warn.

Sermon 157

About the Holy Prophet (ص) and the Holy Quran

Allah deputed the Prophet (ص) at a time when there had been no prophets for some time. People had been in slumber for a long time and the twist of the rope had loosened. The Prophet (ص) came with (a Book containing) testimonials to what (Vols.) were already there and also with a light to be followed. It is the Holy Quran. If you ask it to speak it wo not do so; but I will tell you about it. Be informed that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you.

Part of the same sermon: Autocracy of the Umayyads

At that time, there will remain no house nor tent but oppressors will inflict it with grief and inject sickness in it. On that day, no one in the sky will listen to their excuse, and no one on the earth will come to their help. You selected for the government (caliphate) one who is not fit for it, and you raised him to a status which was not meant for him. Soon Allah will take revenge against everyone who has oppressed. They will be given food for food and drink for drink: colocynth for eating, myrrh and aloes for drinking, and fear for an inner and the sword for an outer covering.

They are nothing but beasts of burden laden carrying sins and like camels laden with evil loads of deeds. I swear, and again swear, that the Umayyads will have to spit out the caliphate as phlegm is spat and, thereafter, they will never taste it nor relish its flavor so long as day and night rotate.

Sermon 158

Good Conduct with People, Ignoring Their Faults

I lived like a good neighbor to you and tried my best to look after you. I freed you from the snare of humbleness and the fetters of oppression through my gratefulness for the little good (from your side). I closed my eyes to your many misdeeds which my eyes had observed and my body had witnessed.

Sermon 159

Praise of Allah

Allah's verdict is judicious and full of wisdom. His Pleasure implies protection and mercy. He decides with knowledge and forgives with forbearance.

O Lord! Praise to You for what You take and give, and for that from which You cure or with which You afflict. I praise You in away which is the most acceptable to You, the most liked by You and the most dignified before You, praise which fills all Your creation and reaches where You desires, praise which is not veiled from You and does not end and whose continuity does not cease.

Greatness of Allah

We do not know the reality of Your greatness except that we know that you are Ever-living and Self-subsisting, the One by Whom all things subsist. Drowsiness or sleep do not overtake You; vision does not reach You and sight does not grasp You. You see the eyes and counts the ages. You hold (people as slaves) by their forelocks and feet. We see Your creation and contemplate on it because of Your might and describe it as (a result of) Your great authority, whereas what is hidden from us, of which our sight has fallen short, which our intelligence has not attained and between which and ourselves curtains of the unknown have been cast, is far greater.

He who frees his heart (from all other engagements) and exerts his thinking in order to know how You established Your throne, how You created Your creatures, how You suspended the air in Your skies and how You spread Your earth on the waves of water... his eyes will return tired, his intelligence defeated, his ears eager and his thinking wandering.

Part of the Same Sermon about Hope and Fear in Allah

One claims, according to his own thinking, that he sets his hopes on Allah. By Allah, the Great One, he speaks a lie. His status is that his hope (in Allah) does not appear through his action, although the hope of everyone who hopes is known through his own action. Every hope is so, except the hope in Allah, the Sublime, if it is impure. Every fear is established except the fear for Allah, if it is unreal.

He hopes big things from Allah and small things from men, but he gives to man (such consideration as) he does not give to Allah. What does he think is the matter with Allah, glorified be His praise?! He is accorded less (consideration) than what is accorded to His creatures. Do you ever fear to be false in your hope in Allah? Or do you not regard Him as the center of your hope? Similarly, if a man fears another man, he gives him (such consideration) out of his fear which he does not give to Allah. Thus, he has made his fear for men ready currency, while his fear of the Creator is mere deferment or promise. This is the case of everyone in whose eye this world appears big (and important) and in whose heart its status is great. He prefers it over Allah, so he inclines towards it and becomes its devotee.

The Example of the Holy Prophet (ص)

Certainly in the Prophet of Allah (ص) was a perfect example for you and a proof concerning the vices of this world, its defects, themultitude of its disgraces and evils. Because its sides had been constrained for him, while its flanks had been spread for others, he was deprived of its milk and turned away from its adornments.

The Example of Musa (Moses)

If you want, I will, as a second example, relate to you concerning Musa, the Interlocutor of Allah (ع), when he said, “O Allah! I am in need of whatever good You may grant me” (Holy Quran, 28: 24). By Allah, he asked Him only for bread to eat because he was used to eating the herbs of the earth, so much so that the greenness of the herbs could be seen from the delicate skin of his belly due to his thinness and the paucity of his flesh.

The Example of Dawud (David)

If you desire, I can give you a third example of Dawud (ع). He is the holder of the Psalms and the reciter among the people of Paradise. He used to prepare baskets of palm-tree leaves with his own hands and would say to his companions: "Which of you will help me by purchasing it?" He used to eat barley bread (bought) out of its prices.

The Example of Aisha (Jesus)

If you desire, I will tell you about Aisha (ع) son of Maryam (Mary). He used a stone for his pillow, put on coarse clothes and ate rough food. His condiment was hunger. His lamp at night was the moon. His shade during the winter was just the expanse of earth eastward and westward. His fruits and flowers were only what grows out of the earth for the cattle. He had no wife to allure him, nor any son to grieve him, nor wealth to deviate (his attention), nor greed to disgrace him. His two feet were his conveyance and his two hands his servant.

Following the Example of the Holy Prophet (ص)

You should follow your Prophet (ص), the pure, the chaste, Allah bless him and his descendants. He is the role model for his follower and the consolation for the seeker of consolation. The most beloved person before Allah is he who follows His Prophet (ص) and who treads in his footsteps. He took the least (share) from this world and even then did not take a full glance at it. Of all the people of the world he was the least satiated and the most empty of stomach. The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. When he knew that Allah, the Glorified One, hated a thing, he, too, hated it. When he knew that Allah regarded a thing as low, he, too, regarded it as low. When he knew that Allah regarded a thing as small, he too regarded it as small. If we love what Allah and His Prophet (ص) hate and deem as great what Allah and His prophet hold as small, that by itself will be enough to isolate us from Allah and a transgression against His Commands.

The Prophet (ص) used to eat on the ground and sit like a slave. He repaired his shoe with his hand and likewise patched his clothes. He would ride an unsaddled ass and seat someone behind him. If there was a curtain on his door with pictures on it, he would say to one of his wives, "Take it away out of my sight because if I look at it, I will then recall the

world and its allurements." Thus, he swayed his heart away from this world and destroyed its remembrance from his mind. He loved that its allurements should remain hidden from his eyes so that he would not secure any good outfit from it, should not regard it as a place of stay and not hope to linger in it. Consequently, he removed it from his mind, let it go away from his heart and kept it hidden from his eyes. In the same way, he who hates a thing should hate to look at it or to hear about it.

Certainly there was in the Prophet of Allāh (ص) all that would warn you of the evils of this world and its defects: He remained hungry along with his main companions. Despite his great nearness, the allurements of the world remained remote from him. Now, one should see with one's intelligence whether Allah honored Muhammad (ص) as a result of this or disgraced him. If he says that Allah disgraced him, he certainly lies and perpetrates a great falsehood. If he says, "Allah honored him," he should know that Allah dishonored the others when He extended the (benefits of the) world for them. Allah holds the same away from anyone who is the nearest to Him from among all men.

Therefore, one should follow His Prophet (ص), tread in his footsteps and do as he did; otherwise, he will not be safe from ruin. Certainly Allah made Muhammad (ص) a sign for the Day of Judgement, a conveyor of tidings for Paradise and a warner of retribution. The Prophet (ص) left this world hungry but entered upon the next world safely. He did not lay one stone upon another (to make a house) till he departed and responded to the call of Allah. How great is Allah's blessing in that He blessed us with the Prophet (ص) as a predecessor whom we should follow, a leader behind whom we should all march!

His Own Example

By Allah! I have been putting patches in my shirts, so much so that now I feel shy of the patches themselves. Someone asked me whether I should put them [such patched garments] away, but I said, "Get away from me! Only in the morning do people (realize the advantage of and) speak highly of the night journey [which they had undertaken]."

Sermon 160

Deputation of the Holy Prophet (ص)

Allah deputed the Prophet (ص) with a glittering light, a clear argument, an open path and a guiding Book. His tribe is the best tribe, and his lineal tree is the best, one the branches of which are in good proportion and fruits hanging (abundantly). His birthplace was Mecca and the place of his migration Taybah (Medīna), from where his name rose high and his voice spread far and wide.

Allah sent him with a sufficing plea, a convincing argument and a rectifying announcement. Through him did Allah disclose the ways that had been forsaken and destroy the innovations that had been introduced. Through Him he explained the detailed Commandments. Now, whoever adopts a religion other than Islam, his misery is definite, his pillar (of support) will be cracked, his fate will be in peril, his end will be a long grief and a distressing punishment.

Drawing Lessons from this World:

I trust in Allah, the trust of bending towards Him, and I seek His guidance for the way that leads to His Paradise and takes to the place of His pleasure. I admonish you, O servants of Allah, to fear Allah and to obey Him because doing so is salvation tomorrow and deliverance forever. He warned (you of chastisement) and did so thoroughly. He persuaded (you towards virtues) and did so fully. He described this world, its cutting away from you, its decay and shifting. Therefore, keep aloof from its attractions because very little of it will accompany you [on your journey back to Allāh]. This abode is the closest to the displeasure of Allah and the remotest from the pleasure of Allah.

So close your eyes, O servants of Allah, from its worries and entanglements because you are sure about its separation and its changing conditions. Fear it like one who sincerely fears and one who struggles hard. Takes a lesson from what you have seen about the falling places of those before you, namely those whose their joints vanished, their eyes and ears destroyed, their honor and prestige disappeared and their pleasure and wealth came to an end. The nearness of their children changed into remoteness. The company of their spouses changed into separation from them. They do not boast over each other, nor do they beget children, nor do they meet each other nor live as neighbors. Therefore, have fear, O servants of Allah, like the fear of one who has control over himself, who can check his passions and perceive with his wisdom. Surely, the matter is quite clear, the banner is standing, the course is level and the way is straight.

Sermon 161

One of the companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) (from Banu Asad) asked him: "How was it that your tribe (Quraish) deprived you of this status (Caliphate) although you deserved it most?" In his reply, the Imām said the following :

O brother of Banu Asad! Your girth is loose and you have put it on the wrong way. Nevertheless, you enjoy in-law kinship and also the right to ask. Since you have asked, listen. As regarding the oppression against us in this matter, although we were the highest in descent and the strongest in kinship to the Messenger of Allah, it was a selfish act over which the hearts of people became greedy, although some people did not care for it. The Arbiter is Allah and to Him is the return on the Day of Judgement.

Now[1] leave alone this story of devastation about which there is hue and cry all around.

Come and look at the son of Abu Sufyan (Mu`awiyah). Time has made me laugh after weeping. No wonder, by Allah; what is this affair which surpasses all wonder and which has increased wrongfulness? These people have tried to put out the flame of Allah's light from His lamp and close His fountain from its source. They mixed epidemic-producing water between them and myself. If the trying hardships were removed from us, I will take them on the course of truthfulness otherwise:

> So let not thy self go (in vain) in grief for them; verily
> Allah knows all that they do. (Holy Quran, 35: 8)

Here is an excerpt from a couplet by the famous Arab poet Imri'ul-Qays al-Kindi:

> ... And let me know the story of
> What happened to the riding camels!

The incident behind this couplet is that when the father of Imri'ul-Qays, namely Hijr ibn al-Harith, was killed, the poet roamed about the various Arab tribes to solicit their help to avenge his father's murder. During this endeavor, he stayed with a man of Jadilah tribe, but finding himself unsafe, he left that place and stayed with Khalid ibn Sadus an-Nabhani. In the meantime, a man of Jadilah named Ba'ith ibn

Huways took away with some of the poet's camels. Imri'ul-Qays complained of this matter to his host, asking him to send with him his she-camels, then he would get back his own. Consequently, Khalid went to those people and asked them to return the camels of his guest which they had stolen. They said that the poet was neither a guest [of theirs] nor under his [host's] protection. Thereupon, Khalid swore that the poet was really his guest, showing them his she-camels that he had with him. They then agreed to return the camels. But actually instead of returning the camels, they drove away the she-camels as well[173].

Another version of this incident is that they did return the camels to Khalid, but instead of handing them over to Imri'ul-Qays, the host kept them for himself. When Imri'ul-Qays came to know this, he composed a few couplets out of which this is one. It means "Now you leave the story of these camels which were stolen but just let me know about the she-camels snatched from my own hands!"

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's intention in quoting this poetry verse, as an illustration, is that "Now that Mu`awiyah is at war, we should talk about it and leave the discussion about the devastation generated by those who had usurped my rights. That time [of the first calamity] has gone away. Now is the time for grappling with the mischief of the hour. So discuss the event of the moment and do not start an untimely strain." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said this because the man had put the question to him at the time of the Battle of Siffin, when the battle was raging and bloodshed was in full swing.

Sermon 162

The Attributes of Allah

Praise be to Allah, Creator of beings and things; He has spread the earth. He makes streams flow and vegetation grow on high lands. His primality has no beginning, nor has His eternity any end. He is the First and forever. He is the everlasting without limit. Foreheads bow before Him and lips declare His Oneness. He determined the limits of things at the time when He created them, keeping Himself away from any likeness.

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[173]As an editor, I apologize for admitting that I really do not know for sure what the details of the incident are. In the absence of the original text, I could not make much sense of this paragraph, and I do not expect the reader to do any better!

Imagination cannot conceive Him as having any limits of movements, or having any limbs or faculties [such as those of His creatures]. It cannot be asked about Him: "Whence?" and no time limit can be attributed to Him by saying, "till then." He is apparent, but it cannot be asked, "from what?" He is hidden, but it cannot be asked, "in what?" He is not a body which can die, nor is He veiled so as to be enclosed. He is not near to things by way of touch, nor is He remote from them by way of separation.

The gazes of people's eyes are not hidden from Him, nor the repetition of words, nor the glimpse of hillocks, nor the tread of a footstep in the dark night or in the deep gloom, where the shining moon casts its light and the effulgent sun comes in its wake, through its setting and appearing again and again with the rotation of time and periods, by the approach of the advancing night or the passing away of the fleeting day.

He precedes every extremity and limit, every counting and numbering. He is far above what those who attribute any limited attribute to Him, such as the qualities of measure, having extremities, living in houses and dwelling in abodes because limits are meant for creation and are attributable only to those other than Allah.

Allah: Originates from Nothing

He did not create things from eternal matter nor after existing examples. Rather, He created whatever He created then He fixed limits thereto. He shaped whatever He shaped, ging the best shape thereto. Nothing can disobey Him, but anyone's obedience is of no benefit to Him. His knowledge about those who died in the past is the same as His knowledge about the survivors. His knowledge about whatever there is in the high skies is like His knowledge of whatever there is in the low earth.

Part of the Same Sermon: Creation of Mankind, the requirements of life

O creature who has been equitably created and who has been nurtured and looked after in the darkness of wombs with multiple curtains! You were originated from the essence of clay (Holy Quran, 23: 12), placed in a still place for a known length (Holy Quran, 77: 21-22) and an ordained time. You used to move in the womb of your mother as an embryo, neither responding to a call nor hearing any voice.

Then you were taken out of your place of stay to a place you had not seen before and you were not acquainted with the means of awaiting its benefits, or with who guided you to eke out your sustenance from the udder of your mother. And when you were in need, He appraised you of the location of what you required or aimed at. Alas! Certainly he who is unable to understand the qualities of a being with shape and limbs is more unable to understand the qualities of the Creator and the more remote from appreciating Him through the limitations.

Sermon 163

When people went to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in a deputation and complained to him about Othman, requesting him to speak to him on their behalf and to admonish him for their sake, he went to see Othman to whom he said the following : [1]

The people are behind me and they have made me an ambassador between you and themselves; but by Allah, I do not know what to say to you. I know nothing (in this matter) which you do not know, nor can I lead you to any matter of which you are not aware. You certainly know what we know. We have not come to know anything before you which we could tell you, nor did we learn any secret which we should reveal to you. You have seen as we have seen and you have heard as we have heard. You sat in the company of the Prophet of Allah (ص) as we did. (Abu Bakr) the son of AbiQuhafah as well as (Umar) ibn al-Khattab were no more responsible for acting righteously than you, since you are nearer than both of them to the Prophet of Allah (ص) through kinship and you also hold relationship to him by marriage which they do not have.

Then (fear) Allah, with regard to your own self for, by Allah, you are not being shown anything as if you are blind or being apprised of anything as if you are ignorant. Everything is clear while the banners of faith are fixed. You should know that among the servants of Allah, the most distinguished person before Allah is the just imam who has been guided (by Allah) and who guides others. So, he stands by the recognized ways of the Prophet's behavior and destroys unrecognized innovations. The (Prophet's) ways are clear and they have signs, while innovations are also clear and they, too, have signs. Certainly, the worst man before Allah is the oppressive imam who has gone astray and through whom others go astray. He destroys the accepted Sunnah and revives abandoned innovations. I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "On the Day of Judgement, the oppressive imam will be brought with none to support him

or to advance excuses on his behalf. Then he will be thrown into Hell where he will rotate as the hand-mill rotates, then (eventually) he will be confined to its hollow.

I swear to you by Allah that you should not be such an imam of the people who will be killed because it has been said that an imam of this people will be killed after which killing and fighting will be made open for them till the Day of Judgement and he will confuse their matters and spread troubles over them. As a result, they will not distinguish right from wrong. They will oscillate like waves and will be utterly misled. You should not behave as the beast of burden for Marwan [ibn al-Hakam, your cousin] so that he may drag you wherever he likes, despite (your) seniority of age and length of life.

It was then that Othman said the following to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): "Ask the people to give me time till I redress their grievances." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "As far as Medina is concerned, time is out of the question. As for more remote areas, you can have the time needed for your order to reach your objectives."

During the Caliphate of Othman, the Muslims were weary of the oppression of the Government. Its officials gathered in Medina to complain to the senior companions of the Prophet (ص). They came to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in a peaceful manner and requested him to see Othman and advise him not to trample on the Muslims' rights and to put an end to the troubles which were proving to be the cause of the people's ruin. It was then that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) went to him and spoke those words.

In order to make the bitterness of the admonition palatable, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) adopted that way of speech in the beginning which will create a sense of responsibility in the addressee and direct him towards his obligations. Thus, by referring to his being a companion of the Prophet (ص), his personal status and kinship to the Prophet (ص) as compared with the two caliphs who preceded him, his intention was to make him realize his duties. At any rate, this was obviously not an occasion for eulogizing him, so its latter portion can be disregarded and the whole speech be regarded as a praise of his accomplishments because from its very beginning, it is evident that whatever Othman did, he did it wilfully, that nothing was done without his knowledge or his being

informed, and that he could not be held unaccountable for it because of his being unaware of it.

If the adoption of a line of action which made the whole Islamic world raise hue and cry in spite of his having being a companion of the Prophet (ص), having heard his instructions, having seen his behavior and having been acquainted with the commandments of Islam, can be regarded as a distinction, then this taunt may also be regarded as a praise. If that is not a distinction, then this, too, cannot be called a praise. In fact, the words about which it is argued, i.e. that they are complimentary, are enough to prove the seriousness of his crime because a crime in ignorance and unawareness is not so serious as the one carrying the weight given to the seriousness of the commission of a crime despite one's knowledge and awareness. Consequently, a person who is unaware of the rise and fall of a road and stumbles in the dark night is to be excused, but a person who is aware of the rise and fall of the road, so he stumbled in broad day light, is liable to be blamed. If, on this occasion, he is told that he has eyes and is also aware of the rise and fall of the way, it will not mean that his vastness of knowledge or the brightness of his eyesight is being praised, but the intention will be that he did not notice the pitfalls despite his eyes and did not walk properly. For him, therefore, having or not having eyes is the same and knowing is equal to not knowing at all.

In this regard, a great emphasis is placed on his being a son-in-law of the Prophet (ص), having married two of daughters, namely Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum, one after the other[174]

Before taking this to be a distinction, the real nature of Othman as the Prophet's son-in-law should be scrutinized. History shows that in this matter Othman did not enjoy the distinction of being the first [to marry them]. Before him, Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum had been married to two sons of Abu Lahab, namely Utbah and Utaybah [who is condemned in the Holy Quran]. Yet despite their being sons-in-law, they were not been included among the people of prestige during the time preceding the dawn of Prophethood. How, then, can this be regarded as a source of distincion without any personal merit, when there is no authority about the importance of this relationship, nor was any importance attached to this matter in such a way that there might have been some competition

[174]Many historians assert that both Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum were daughters of Khadija, the Prophet's first wife, by her second husband, Ateeq ibn `Aaith of Banu Makhzum. Both ladies, therefore, were not daughters of the Prophet (ص) but his step-daughters.

between Othman and some other important personality in this regard and that his selection for it might have given him prominence, or that the two ladies might have been shown to possess an important status in history, tradition or biography as a result of which this relationship could be given a special importance and regarded as a cause of one's distinction?! If the marriage of these two daughters to Utbah and Utaybah during the period of jahiliyya is held as lawful on the ground that marriage with the unbelievers had not till then been made unlawful, then in Othman's case, the condition for lawfulness was his acceptance of Islam. There is no doubt that he had pronounced the Kalima (ash-shahadatayn: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (ص) is His Messenger") and had accepted Islam publicly. As such, this marriage can be held a proof of his acceptance of Islam. But no other honor can be proved through it. Again, it is also not agreed upon that these two ladies were the real daughters of the Messenger of Allah because there is one group [of historians] which disproves their being the Prophet's real daughters, tracing their descent as the daughters of Khadija's sister, Halah, or her daughters by her own previous [second] husband. Thus, Abul-Qasim al-Kufi (d. 352 A.H.) writes the following:.

"Some time prior to the Messenger of Allah (ص) marrying Khadija, [Abu] Halah [second husband of Khadija] died, leaving two daughters, one named Zainab and the other named Ruqayyah. Both of the latter were [later] raised by the Prophet (ص) and Khadija, looking after them as it was the custom before Islam when a child was assigned to whoever brought him up" (Al-Istighatha, p.69).

Ibn Hisham has written the following about the issues of Hadrat Khadija:.

"Before her marriage to the Prophet (ص), she was married to Abu Halah ibn Malik. She delivered for him Hind, son of Abu Halah, and Zainab, daughter of Abu Halah. Before her marriage to Abu Halah, she had been married to `Utayyiq [or `Ateeq according to other references] ibn Abid ibn Abdillah ibn Amr ibn Makhzum and she delivered for him Abdullah and a daughter" (Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya, Vol. 4, p. 293).

This prove that Hadrat Khadija had two daughters before being married to the Prophet (ص). According to all evidences, they will be called his "daughters" and those to whom they were married will be called his "sons-in-law," but the status of this relationship will be the same as if those girls were his daughters. Therefore, before putting it forth

as a matter of pride, the real status of the daughters should be noted and a glance should be cast at Othman's conduct. In this regard, al-Bukhari and other narrators (of traditions) as well as historians record this tradition as follows:.

Anas ibn Malik relates that: "We were present on the occasion of the burial of the Prophet's daughter Umm Kulthum. While the Prophet (ص) was sitting beside her grave, I saw his eyes shedding tears. Then he said, 'Is there anyone among you who has not committed a sin last night?' Abu Talhah (Zayd ibn Sahl al-Ansari) said, 'I' The Prophet (ص) said, 'Then you get into the grave.' He got down into the grave."

The commentators said that by "committed a sin", the Holy Prophet (ص) meant to say "anyone who had not had sexual intercourse."[175]

On this occasion, the Holy Prophet (ص) unveiled the private life of Othman and prevented him from getting down into the grave, although it was a prominent merit of the Prophet's character that he did not disgrace or belittle anyone by publicly exposing his private life and despite his knowledge of others' shortcomings which he ignored. But in this case, the filth was such that it was deemed necessary to disgrace him before the whole crowd.

Since Othman did not show any regard for the demise of his wife (Umm Kulthum), nor was he moved or felt sorry (for this event), thus paying no heed to severing his relationship with the Holy Prophet (ص) (for being his son-in-law), he (Othman) had a sexual intercourse on the same night; therefore, the Holy Prophet (ص) deprived him of this right and honor. For more details, refer to: al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 2, pp. 100-101, 114; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, Vol. 3, pp. 126, 228, 229, 270; al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 4, p. 47; al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 4, p. 53; Ibn Sa`d, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Vol. 8, p. 26; as-Suhayli, Al-Rawd al-Anif, Vol. 2, p. 107; Ibn Hajar, Al-Isaba, Vol. 4, p. 489; Fath al-Bari, Vol. 3, p. 122; al-Ayni, `Umdat al-Qari, Vol. 4, p. 85; Ibn al-Athir, Al-Nihaya, Vol. 3, p. 276; Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-`Arab, Vol. 9, pp. 280-281; az-Zabidi, Taj al-Arus, Vol. 6, p. 220.

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[175]Is committing any sexual intercourse a sin?! Not at all if it is with one's own wife; it will be regarded as a good deed as we are told in *hadith*. But such is the text we have to work with. As an editor, I had to work with this text without the good fortune of comparing it with the original Arabic text.

Sermon 164

Describing the Wonderful Creation of the Peacock, the Wonderful Creation of Birds

Allah has provided wonderful creations including the living, the lifeless, the stationary and the moving. He has established such clear proofs for His delicate creative power and great might that minds bend down to Him in acknowledgment thereof and in submission to Him and arguments about His oneness strike our ears. He has created birds of various shapes which live in the burrows of the earth, in the openings of high passes and on mountain peaks.

They have different kinds of wings and various characteristics. They are controlled by the rein of (Allah's) authority. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the vast firmament and the open atmosphere. He brought them into existence from non-existence in strange external shapes and composed them with joints and bones covered with flesh. He prevented some of them from flying easily in the sky because of their heavy bodies and allowed them to use their wings only close to the ground. He has set them in different colors by His delicate might and exquisite creative power.

Among them are those which are tinted with one hue and there is no other hue except the one in which they have been dyed. There are others which are tinted with one color and they have a neck ring of a different color than that with which they are tinted.

About the Peacock

The most amazing among them in its creation is the peacock which Allah has created in the most symmetrical dimensions and arranged its hues in the best arrangement with wings the ends of which are inter-weaved together and with a long tail. When it approaches its female, it spreads out its folded tail and raises it up so as to cast a shade over its head, as if it were the sail of a boat being pulled by the sailor. It feels proud of its colors and sways with its movements. It copulates like the cocks. It leaps (on the female) for cohabitation like lustful energetic men at the time of fighting.

I am telling you all this from observation, unlike he who narrates on the basis of a weak authority. For example, it is the belief of some

people that it cohabits with the female by a tear which flows from its eyes. When it stops on the edges of the eyelids, the female swallows it and lays its eggs thereby, not through cohabitation by a male other than by means of this flowing tear. Even if they say this, it will be no more amazing than (what they say about) the mutual feeding of the crows (prior to cohabitation). You will imagine its feathers to be like sticks made of silver and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing there to be of pure gold and pieces of green emerald. If you likened them to anything growing on land, you will say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected during every spring. If you likened them to clothes, they will be like printed apparels or amazing variegated clothes of Yemen. If you likened them to ornaments, then they will be like gems of different color with studded silver.

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, throwing open its tail and wings, laughing, admiring the handsomeness of its outfit and the hues of its necklace of gems. But when it casts its glance at its legs, it cries loudly with a voice which indicates its call for help, displaying its true grief because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks. At the end of its shin, there is a thin thorn, and on the crown of its head, there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and it stretches up to its belly like the hair-dye of Yemen in color or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror which looks as if it has been covered with a black veil. Other than that, on account of its excessive luster and extreme brightness, it appears that a lush green color has been mixed with it. Along the openings of its ears there is a line of shining bright daisy color like the thin end of a pen. Whiteness shines on the black background. There is hardly a hue from which it has not taken a bit and improved it further by regular polish, luster, silken brightness and brilliance. It is, therefore, like scattered blossoms which have not been seasoned by the rains of spring or the summer sun.

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its outfit. They all fall away and grow again. They fall away from the feather stems like the falling of leaves from twigs, then they begin to join together and grow till they return to the state that existed before their falling away. The new hues do not change from the previous ones, nor does any color occur anywhere other than in its own place. If you carefully look at one hair from the hairs of its feather stems, it will look like a red rose, then like emerald green, then like golden yellow.

How can sharpness of intellect describe such a creation, or faculty of mind, or the utterances of describers manage to tell of it? Even its

smallest parts have made it impossible for the imagination to pick them out or for tongues to describe them. Glorified is Allah Who has disabled intellects from describing the creation which He placed openly before the eyes and which they see bounded, shaped, arranged and colored. He also disabled tongues from briefly describing its qualities and also from expanding in its praise.

The magnificence of the Creator in Great and Small Creations

Glorified is Allah Who has assigned feet to small ants and gnats and also to those above them, the serpents and the elephants. He has made it obligatory upon Himself that no skeleton in which He infuses a spirit will move, but that death is its promised place and destruction its final end.

Part of the Same Sermon: Describing Paradise

If you cast your mind's eye at what is described to you about Paradise, your heart will begin to hate the delicacies of this world that have been displayed here, namely its desires and its pleasures and the beauties of its scenes. And you will be lost in the rustling of the trees whose roots lie hidden in the mounds of musk on the banks of the rivers in Paradise and in the attraction of the bunches of fresh pearls on the twigs and branches of those trees and in the appearance of different fruits from under the cover of their leaves. These fruits can be picked without difficulty as they come down at the desire of their pickers. Pure honey and fermented wine will be handed round to those who settle down in the courtyards of its palaces.

They are a people whom honor has always followed till they were made to settle in the house of eternal abode, and they obtained rest from the movement of journeying. O listener! If you busy yourself in advancing towards these wonderful scenes which will rush towards you, then your heart will certainly die due to eagerness for them, and you will be prepared to seek the company of those in the graves, straight away from my audience here, and hasten towards them. May Allah, through His mercy, include us and yourselves, too, among those who strive with their hearts for the abodes of the virtuous.

Note explaining some of the wonderful and obscure portions of this sermon:.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "In the words of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): 'Aya'urru bimalaqihihi, 'al-arr' implies copulation, e.g. When it is said, 'arra'r-rajulu al-mar'ata ya'urruha,' it means 'He copulated with the woman.'"

In his words "Aka'annahu qal'u dariyyin anajahu nutiyyuhu, al-qal," he means the sail of a boat. "Dari" means belonging to Darin, a small town on the coast from where scents are bought. And "anajahu" means Aturned it. It is said, "anajtun'n-naqata" like "nasartu - a'najuha anjan" when you turn the she-camel. And "an-nuti" means "sailor". His words "daffatay jufunihi" mean: edges of the eyelids, since "ad-daffatan" means: The two edges. As for his words "wa filadhu'z-zabarjadi," "al-filadh" is the plural of "al-fildhah"; it means "piece". His words "ka ba'isi'l-lulu'i'r-ratibi": "al-kibasah" means "bunch of dates". "Al-`asalij" means twigs. Its singular is "`Usluj".

Sermon 165

Advice for Observing Courtesy and Kindness and Keeping in and out of the Same

The young among you should follow the elders while the elders should be kind to the young. Do not be like those rude people of the pre-Islamic (al-jahiliyyah) period who did not exert themselves in religion nor use their intellects in the matter of Allah. They[1] are like the breaking of eggs in the nest of a dangerous bird because their breaking looks bad, but keeping them intact will mean the production of dangerous young ones.

Part of the same sermon about the autocracy and oppression of the Umayyads and their fate

They will divide after their unity and scatter away from their nucleus. Some of them will stick to the branches and bend down as the branches bend, until Allah, the Sublime, will gather them together for the Day that will be the very worst for the Umayyads just as the scattered bits of clouds assemble in the autumn. Allah will create affinity among them. Then He will make them into a strong mass like the mass of clouds. Then He will open doors for them to flow out of their starting place like the flood of the two gardens (of Saba') from which neither high rocks

remained safe nor small hillocks. Its flow could be repulsed neither by strong mountains nor by high lands. Allah will scatter them in the low lands of valleys, then will He make them flow like streams throughout the earth. Through them He will arrange the taking of rights of one people by another people and make one people stay in the houses of those of other people's. By Allah, all their status and esteem will dissolve as fat dissolves on the fire.

The Cause of Tyranny

O people! If you had not evaded support for the truth and had not felt weakness from crushing wrong, then he who does not match you will not have aimed at you, and he who over-powered you will not have over-powered you. But you roamed about the deserts (of disobedience) like Banu Isra'il (Children of Israel). I swear by my life that after me your tribulations will increase manifold because you will have abandoned the truth behind your backs, severed your ties with your near ones and established relations with remote ones. Be informed that if you had followed the one who was calling you (to guidance), he will have let you tread the ways of the Prophet (ص), then you will have been spared the difficulties of misguidance, and you will have thrown away the crushing burden from round your necks.

The implication here is that the fake type of Islam of these people required that they should not be assaulted, but the consequence of sparing them in this way was that they would create mischief and rebellion.

Sermon 166

Delivered at the Inception of his Caliphate

Fulfillment of rights and obligations and advice to fear Allah in all matters:

Allah, the One Glorified by all, has revealed [for you] a Book of guidance wherein He has explained virtue and vice. You should adopt the course of virtue whereby you will have guidance and keep aloof from the path of vice so that you may remain on the right path. (Mind) the obligations, (mind) the obligations! Fulfil them for the sake of pleasing Allah and they will take you to Paradise. Surely, Allah has made unlawful the things which are not unknown and made lawful the things which are without defect. He has declared paying regard to Muslims as the highest

of all regards. He has placed the rights of Muslims in the same level (of importance) as devotion (to Him and to His oneness). Therefore, a Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand every (other) Muslim is safe except in the matter relevant to the truth. It is not, therefore, lawful to assault a Muslim except when it is obligatory.

Hasten towards the most common matter which is peculiar to everyone, and it is death. Certainly, people (who have already gone) are ahead of you while the hour (Day of Judgement) is driving you from behind. Remain light, in order that you may overtake them. Your backs are being protected for the sake of protecting the fronts. Fear Allah in the matter of His creatures and His cities because you will be questioned even about lands and beasts. Obey Allah and do not disobey Him. When you witness virtue (being done) adopt it, and when you witness vice (being committed) avoid it.

Sermon 167

Having sworn allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), some people from among the companions of the Prophet (ص) said to him. "You should punish the people who assaulted Othman," whereupon he said the following :

O Brethren! I am not ignorant of what you know, but how do I have the power for it while those who assaulted him are in the height of their power? They have superiority over us, not we over them. They are now in the status that even your slaves have risen with them and bedouin Arabs, too, have joined them. They are now among you and are harming you as they please. Do you see any way to be able to do what you aim at?

This demand is certainly that of the pre-Islamic (jahiliyya) period, and these folks have support behind them. When the matter is taken up, people will have different views about it. One group will think as you do, but another will not think as you think, and there will be still another group that will be neither this way nor that. Be patient till people quiet down and hearts settle in their places so that rights can be achieved for people easily. Rest assured from me and see what is given to you by me. Do not do anything which shatters your power, weakens your strength and engenders feebleness and disgrace. I shall control this affair as far as possible, but if I find it necessary, the last treatment will, of course, be branding with a hot iron (through fighting).

Sermon 168

When the people of Jamal set out for Basra, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following :.

There is no doubt that Allah sent down the Prophet (ص) as a guide with an eloquent Book and a standing command. No one will be ruined by it except one who ruins his own self. Certainly, only doubtful innovations cause ruin except those from which Allah may protect you. In Allah's authority lies the safety of your affairs. Therefore, render Him such obedience as is neither blameworthy nor insincere. By Allah, you must do so; otherwise, Allah will take away from you the power of Islam and will never thereafter return it to you till it reverts to others.

Certainly, these people are in agreement in disliking my authority. I will carry on till I perceive disunity among you because if they succeed in spite of the unsoundness of their view, the whole organization of the Muslims will be shattered. They are hankering after this world out of jealousy against him on whom Allah has bestowed it. So they intend to revert the matters on their backs (return to the pre-Islamic period), while on us it is obligatory, for your sake, to abide by the Book of Allah (Holy Quran), the Sublime and the conduct of the Prophet of Allah (ص), to stand by His rights and to revive his Sunnah.

Sermon 169

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) approached Basra, a bedouin met him and spoke to him, as he had been sent to him by a group of people of Basra to inquire from him on their behalf his status vis-a-vis the people of Jamal. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) explained to him his status with regard to them. From it, he became convinced that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was on the right track. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) asked him to swear the oath of allegiance to him, but he replied, "I am just a messenger of people and shall not do anything till I get back to them. Upon this, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him the following:

"If those whom you left behind send you as a forerunner to search out a rain-fed area for them, and you return to them and appraise them of greenery and water, but they disagree with you and go towards dry and

barren land, what will you do then?" The man said, "I will leave them and go towards greenery and water." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) then said, "So, then, stretch your hand!" This man related later saying, "By Allah! By such a clear argument, I could not refrain from swearing allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

This man was known as Kulayb al-Jarmi.

Sermon 170

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) decided to fight the enemy face-to-face at Siffin he said the following: .

"O Lord! O Sustainer of the high sky, Suspender of the firmament which You have made a shelter for the night and the day, an orbit for the sun and the moon and a path for the rotating stars and for populating it! You have created a group of Your angels who do not get weary of worshipping You. O Sustainer of this earth which You have made an abode for people and a place for the movement of insects, beasts and countless other creatures, seen and unseen! O Sustainer of strong mountains which You have made as pegs for the earth and (a means of) support for people! Grant us victory over our enemy, O Lord, save us from excesses and keep us on the straight path of truth! But if You grant them victory over us, then grant us martyrdom and save us from mischief.

Where are those who protect honor and those self-respecting persons who defend respectable people in the time of hardship? Shame is behind you while Paradise is in front of you.

Sermon 171

About the Consultative Committee and the Battle of Jamal

Praise be to Allah from Whose view one sky does not conceal another sky nor one earth another earth!

Part of the same sermon: About the "Consultative Committee" After the Death of `Umar ibn al-Khattab:

Someone[176] said to me, "O son of Abu Talib! You covet the caliphate." I said to him, "Rather, you are, by Allah, more greedy, although more remote from it, while I am more suited as well as nearer. I have demanded it as my right, while you are intervening between me and it and you are turning my face from it." When I knocked at his ears with arguments among the crowd of those present he was startled as if he was stunned not knowing what reply to give me about it.

O Lord! I seek Your succor against the tribesmen of Quraish and those who are assisting them because they are denying me (the rights of) kinship, have lowered my high status and are united in opposing me in the matter (of the caliphate) which is my right then they said, "Be informed that the rightful thing is that you have it and also that you may leave it."[177]

"They (the tribesmen of Quraish and those who are assisting them) were not only content to keep me away from my right over the

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[176]During the incident of the Consultative Committee, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas repeated to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) what `Umar had said in his last hours, that is, that "O Ali! You are very greedy for the status of Caliphate." Ali (ع) replied: "He who demands his own right cannot be called greedy; rather, greedy is he who prevents the securing of ones right and tries to grab it despite being unfit for it."

There is no doubt that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) considered the Caliphate to be his right and demanded it. The demand for one's right does not dispel a right so that it may be put forth as an excuse for not assigning him the caliphate, and the demand may be held as a sign of greed. Even if it was greed, who was not involved in this greed? Was not the pull between the Muhajirun and the Ansar, the mutual struggle between the members of the "Consultative Committee" and the mischief mongering of Talhah and az-Zubayr the product of this very greed? If Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had been greedy for this status, he would have stood for it regardless of tis consequences and outcomes. When Abbas (uncle of the Prophet [ص]) and Abu Sufyan pressed him to (accept to swear the oath of) allegiance, and when, after the third Caliph, people thronged to him for (swearing) allegiance, he had to accept their offer regardless of the deteriorated conditions. But at no time did Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) take any step which indicated that he wanted the Caliphate for the sake of caliphate. Rather, his demand for the caliphate was only with the objective that its aspects should not be altered, and the religion should not become the victim of others' desires, not that he should enjoy the pleasures of life which could be attributed to greed.

[177]Explaining the meaning, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's intention was to say:

caliphate which they have usurped (from me), but rather claimed that it was their right whether to give it to me or prevent me from the same, and that I have no right to argue with them."Furthermore, the intention (of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)) was as follows: "Had they not said that it was right to keep away from the caliphate, it would have been easy to endure it. This is so because this will have, at least, showed their admitting my right although they were not prepared to concede it" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 9, p. 306).

Part of the Same Sermon: Describing the People of Jamal

They (Talhah, az-Zubayr and their supporters) came out dragging the wife of the Messenger of Allah (Aisha) just as a bondmaid is dragged for sale. They took her to Basra where those two (Talhah and az-Zubayr) put their own women in their houses while exposing the wife of the Messenger of Allah to themselves and to others in the army in which there was not a single individual who had not pledged his obedience and sworn to me allegiance quite willingly, without any compulsion.

Here in Basra, they approached my Governor and coffers of the public treasury, the funds of its other inhabitants. They killed some of them in captivity as well as others in treachery. By Allah, even if they had willfully killed only one individual from among the Muslims without any fault, it will have been lawful for me to kill all of this army because they were present in it but did not disagree with it nor prevented it by tongue or hand, not to say that they killed from among the Muslims a number equal to that with which they had marched on them.

Sermon 172

On the Eligibility for Caliphate

The Prophet (ص) is the trustee of Allah's revelation, the Last of His Prophets, the giver of tidings of His mercy and the warner of His chastisement.

O people! The most rightful of all persons for this matter (the caliphate) is he who is most competent among them to maintain it and he who best knows Allah's commands in its regard. If any mischief is created by a mischief-monger, he will be called upon to repent. If he refuses, he will be fought. By my life, if the question of Imamate was not to be decided unless all the people were present, then there would be no

such case. But those who agreed about it imposed the decision on those who were absent, so much so that he who was present could not dissent, and the one who was absent could not choose (any one else). Be informed that I shall fight two persons: one who claims what is not his, and the other who ignores what is obligatory upon him.

The Need for Wisdom in Fighting Against Muslims

O servants of Allah! I admonish you to fear Allah because it is the best advice to be mutually given by persons and the best of all things before Allah. The door of war has been opened between you and the other Muslims. And this banner will be borne only by him who is a man of foresight, of endurance, and of knowing the status of rightfulness. Therefore, you should go ahead with that whereby you are ordered and desist from what you are required to refrain. Do not make haste in any matter till you have clarified it. In the case of every matter which you dislike, we have the right to change it.

The Behavior of this World with those who Cling to it

Be informed that this world which you have started to covet, and in which you are interested, and which sometimes enrages you and sometimes pleases you, is not your (permanent) abode, nor is it the place of your stay for which you might have been created, nor is it the one to which you have been invited. Be informed that it will not last for you, nor will you live along with it. If anything out of this world deceives you (i.e. attracts you), its own evils warn you, too. You should give up (the objects of) its deceit in favor of (the objects of) its warning and (the objects of) its attraction in favor of (the objects of) its horrors. And while being in it, advance towards that house to which you have been called and turn your hearts away from the world. None of you should cry like a bondmaid over anything which she has been deprived of. Seek the perfection of Allah's bounty over you through endurance in obeying Allah and in safeguarding what He has asked you to safeguard, namely His Book.

Be informed that the loss of anything of this world will not harm you so long as you have guarded the principles of your religion. Know also that after the loss of your religion, nothing of this world, for which you have cared, will ever benefit you. May Allah carry our hearts and yours towards what is right, and may He grant you and ourselves endurance.

When the people collected in the saqifa of Banu Sa'idah in connection with the election, even those who were not present there were made to follow the decision taken the re. And the principle was adopted that those present at the election had no right to reconsider the matter or to break the allegiance and those not present could do nothing but acquiesce in the agreed decision. But when the people of Medīna swore allegiance at the hands of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the Governor of Syria (Mu`awiyah) refused to follow suit on the ground that since he was not present on the occasion he was not bound to abide by it, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied in this sermon on the basis of these accepted and agreed principles and conditions which had been established among these people and had become unable to convert. AWhen the people of Medīna and the Ansar and the Muhajirun have sworn allegiance on my hand, Mu`awiyah had no right to keep aloof from it on the ground that he was not present on the occasion, nor were Talhah and az-Zubayr entitled to break the pledge after swearing allegiance.

On this occasion, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did not argue on the strength of any saying of the Prophet (ص) which will serve as his final say about the caliphate because the grounds for refusal in his case was with regard to the modus operandi of the principle of election. Therefore, in keeping with the requirements of the situation a reply based on the agreed principles of the adversary could alone quiet him. Even if he had argued on the strength of the Prophet's command it will have been subjected to various interpretations and the matter will have been prolonged instead of being settled. Again Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had seen that soon after the death of the Prophet (ص) all his sayings and commands had been set aside. Therefore, how after the lapse of a long time, could one be expected to accept it when habit had been established to follow one's free will against the Prophet's sayings.

Sermon 173

About Talhah ibn Ubaydillah

(Delivered when he received the news that Talhah and az-Zubayr had already left for Basra to fight him):

As far as I am concerned, I will never be too afraid to fight or to initiate a battle because I am satisfied with the promise of Allah's support for me. By Allah, Talhah has hastened with an oath to avenge Othman's

murder fearing lest the demand for Othman's blood be made against his own self. This is so because the people's idea in this matter is about him and, in fact, he was the most anxious among them for killing Othman . Therefore, he has tried to create a misunderstanding by collecting forces in order to confuse the matter and to create doubt.

By Allah, he did not act in either of three ways about Othman: If the son of Affan (Othman) was wrong, as Talhah believed, it is necessary for him to support those who killed[178] him or to keep away from his supporters. If Othman was the victim of oppression, then Talhah should have been among those who were keeping (the assailants) away from him or were advancing pleas on his behalf. If he was in doubt about these two alternatives, then it was incumbent upon him to leave him (Othman) and to retire, to leave the men with him. But he adopted none of these three ways and came out with a thing in which there is nothing good and his excuses are not acceptable.

Sermon 174

Warning Neglectful People; the Vastness of His Knowledge

O people who are (negligent of Allah but) not neglected (by Allah) and those who miss (doing good deeds) but are to be caught! How is it that I see you becoming distanced from Allah and becoming interested in others? You are like the camel whom the shepherd drives to a disease-stricken pasture and a disastrous watering place. They are like animals who are fed in order to be slaughtered, but they do not know what is intended for them. When they are treated well, they consider that day to be their whole life and eating to their fill as their aim.

By Allah, if I wish, I can tell everyone of you from where he has come, where he has to go and all his affairs. But I fear lest you (in such case) should abandon the Messenger of Allah (ص) in my favor. I shall certainly convey these things to the selected ones who will remain safe from such a dreadful thing. By Allah Who deputed the Prophet (ص) with

[178]The Imam here means to say that if Talhah considered Othman an oppressor, then after his assassination, instead of getting ready to avenge his blood, he should have supported his killers and justified their action. It is not the intention that in the case of `Othmān being wrong that Talhah should have supported the attackers because he was already supporting and encouraging them.

the truth and distinguished him over all creation, I do not speak save the truth. He (the Prophet (ص)) informed me of all this and also of the death of everyone who dies, the salvation of everyone who is granted salvation and the consequences of this matter (the caliphate). He left nothing (that could) pass into my head without putting it in my ear and telling me about it.

O people! By Allah, I do not impel you to any obedience unless I practice it before you, nor do I restrain you from any disobedience unless I desist from it before you.

Those who drink from the springs of revelation and the Divine inspiration are able to see things that are hidden behind the curtains, things of the unknown, and the events which will occur in the future. They do so in the same way as objects are seen with the eyes. This does not contradict with the following statement of Allah: "Say: 'None (either) in the heavens or in the earth knows the unseen save Allah'" (Holy Quran, 27: 65) because this verse contains the negation of personal knowledge of the unknown, but not the negation of knowledge which is required by the prophets and holy persons through the Divine inspiration by virtue of which they make prophecies about the future and unveil many events and happenings. Several verses of the Holy Quran support this view such as:.

"When the Prophet (ص) confided a matter to one of his wives, she divulged it (to others) and Allah informed him of it. He revealed a part of it and avoided a part. So, when he informed her of it, said she: 'Who informed you of this?' He said, "The All-knowing, the All-aware informed me'" (Holy Quran, 66: 3).

"These are of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you (O Our Prophet Muhammad)..."(Holy Quran, 11: 49).

It is, therefore, wrong to argue in support for the view that if it is said that the prophets and holy persons possess knowledge of the unknown, this will imply duality with regard to the Divine attributes. It will have implied duality if it were said that someone other than Allah has personal knowledge of the unknown. When it is not so, and the knowledge of the Prophets and Imams is given by Allah, it has no connection with duality. If duality should mean what is alleged, what will be the status of Isa's (Jesus's) assertion related thus in the Holy Qurany:

"... .Out of clay will I make for you like the figure of a bird, and I will breathe into it and it shall become a flying bird by Allah's permission, and I shall heal the blind and the leper and will cause the dead to rise to life by Allah's permission, and I will declare to you what you eat and what you store in you houses" (Holy Quran, 3: 49).

If it is believed that Aisha (Jesus) could create and bestow life with Allah's permission, does this mean that he was Allah's partner in the attributes of creation and revival? If this is not so, then how can it be said that if Allah gives someone the knowledge of the unknown, it implies that he has been taken him to be His partner in His attributes? And how can anyone extol one's belief in the Oneness of Allah by holding that the knowledge of the unknown implies duality?

No one can deny the fact that some people either see in dreams certain things which have yet to occur in the future, or that things can be read through interpretation of the dream, while during a dream neither do the senses function nor do the powers of understanding and comprehension operate. Therefore, if some events become known to some people while being awake, why should there be amazement over it, and what are the grounds for rejecting it when it stands to reason that things possible in dreams are also possible in wakefulness? Thus, Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani has written that it is possible to achieve all this because in a dream the spirit becomes free from looking after the body and is removed from bodily connections. As a result of this, it perceives such hidden realities which could not be seen because of the obstruction of the body. In the same way, those perfect beings who pay no heed to bodily matters and turn with all the attention of spirit and heart towards the center of knowledge can see those realities and secrets which the ordinary eyes are unable to discern. Therefore, keeping in view the spiritual greatness of Ahl al-Bayt (ع), it should not appear strange that they were aware of events which were going to occur in the future. Ibn Khaldun has written the following:.

"When thaumaturgic feats are performed by others, what do you think about those who were distinguished for their knowledge and honesty and were a mirror of the Prophet's traits, confiding what Allah had for them on account of their noble lineage, is a proof of the high performances of his chaste offspring (Ahl al-Bayt [ع]). Consequently, many events about knowledge of the unknown are related about Ahl al-Bayt (ع), events which are not related about others" (Al-Muqaddima, p. 23).

Thus, there is no cause for wonder over Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's claim since he was brought up by the Prophet (ص) and was a student in Allah's school. Of course, those whose knowledge does not extend beyond the limits of physical goals and whose means of learning are confined to the bodily senses refuse to believe in the knowledge about the paths of the Divine cognizance and reality. If this kind of claim was unique and was heard only from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), then minds could have wavered and temperaments could have hesitated to accept it. But if the Holy Quran records even such a claim of Aisha (Jesus) that "... I can tell you what you eat or drink or store in your houses..." then why should there be any hesitation about Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's claim when it is agreed upon that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had succeeded in attaining distinctions of the Prophet (ص), and it cannot be disputed that the Prophet (ص) did not know what Aisha (Jesus) knew. Thus, if the successor of the Prophet (ص) advances such a claim, why should it be rejected, particularly since this vastness of knowledge of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is the best testimony and proof of the Prophet's knowledge and perfection, a living miracle testifying to his truthfulness.

In this regard, it is amazing that even having knowledge of events which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did not, through any of his words or deeds, indicate that he knew them. Thus, commenting about the extraordinary importance of this claim, Sayyid Ibn Tawus writes the following:.

"An amazing aspect of this claim is that despite the fact that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was aware of conditions and events, he observed such conduct by way of his words and deeds that one who saw him could not believe that he knew the secrets and unknown acts of others because the wise agree that if a person knows what event is likely to take place or what step his comrade is going to take, or if the hidden secrets of people are known to him, then the effects of such knowledge will appear through his movements and the expressions of his face. But the man who, in spite of knowing everything, behaves in a way as though he is unaware and knows nothing, personality is a miracle and a combination of contradictions.

At this stage, the question arises as to why Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did not act upon the dictates of his secret knowledge. The reply

to this is that the commands of the Sharī`a are based on apparent conditions; otherwise, secret knowledge is a kind of miracle and power which Allah grants to His prophets and Imams. Although the prophets and Imams possess this power always, they cannot make use of it at any time unless and until there is permission of Allah and on the proper occasion. For example, the verse quoted above about Aisha (Jesus) which tells that he had the power to give life, to heal the blind and declare what one ate and stored in his house, etc. he (Jesus) was not used to practice this power on everything or every corpse or everyone who met him. He used to practice this power only by the permission of Allah and on the proper occasion.

If prophets and other holy men acted on the basis of their secret knowledge, it would have meant serious dislocation and disturbance in the affairs of the people. For example, if a prophet, or the Almighty, on the basis of his secret knowledge, punishes a condemnable man by killing him, there will be a great commotion and agitation among those who see it on the ground that he killed an "innocent" man. This is why Allah has not permitted the basing of conclusions on secret knowledge except in a few special cases, enjoining the following of observable factors. Thus, despite his being aware of the hypocrisy of some of the hypocrites, the Prophet (ص) extended to them the amicable treatment that be extended to other Muslims.

Now, there can be no room for the objection that if Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) knew secret matters, then why did he not act accordingly? The answer is: It has been demonstrated that he was not obliged to act according to the requirements of his secret knowledge. Of course, where conditions so required, he did, indeed, disclose some matters for the purposes of preaching, admonishing, giving good tidings (of rewards) or warning (against punishments), so that future events could be avoided. For example, Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (ع) informed Yahya ibn Zayd that if he marched out [against the Umayyads], he would be killed. Ibn Khaldun writes the following in this regard:.

"It has been authentically related from Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq that he used to forewarn some of his close relatives of the fateful events to fall upon them. For example, he forewarned his cousin Yahya ibn Zayd of being killed, but the latter disobeyed him; he marched out and was martyred in Juzjan" (Al-Muqaddama, p. 233).

Nevertheless, where there was apprehension that minds would worry, such was not disclosed at all. That is why in this sermon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) avoided more details in view of his apprehension that people would begin to regard him as being higher than the Prophet (ص). Despite all of this, people did, in fact, go astray about Isa (Jesus). Likewise with regard to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), some people also started saying all sorts of things and were thus misled into resorting to exaggeration.

Sermon 175

Admonishing

(O creatures!) Seek benefit from the sayings of Allah, be admonished of Allah and accept the advice of Allah because Allah has left no excuse for you when He has provided clear guidance for you, has put before you the plea and clarified for you what deeds He likes and what deeds He hates, so that you may ac upon one and avoid the other. The Prophet of Allah (ص) used to say, "Paradise is surrounded by unpleasant things, while Hell is surrounded by desires."

You should know that every act of obedience to Allah is unpleasant in appearance while every disobedience to Allah has the appearance of enjoyment. May Allāh have mercy on the person who keeps aloof from his desire and uproot the appetite of his heart because this heart has far-reaching aims, yet it goes on pursuing disobedience through desires.

You should know, O servants of Allah, that a believer should be distrustful of his heart every morning and evening. He should always blame it (for shortcomings) and ask it to add to (its good deeds). You should behave like those who have gone before you and those ahead. They left this world like a traveler and covered it as distance is covered.

The Greatness of the Holy Quran

And be aware that this Holy Quran is an adviser that never deceives, a leader who never misleads, and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit in the company of this Holy Quran except that when he rises, he will achieve one addition or one diminution: addition in his guidance or elimination in his (spiritual) blindness. You should also know that no one will need any thing beyond (guidance from) the Holy Quran

and no one will be free from want beyond (guidance from) the Holy Quran. Therefore, seek cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the most serious diseases, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, rebellion (against God's commandments) and misguidance. Pray to Allah through it and turn to Allah through loving it. Do not ask the people through it. There is nothing like it through which the people should turn to Allah, the Sublime.

Be informed that it intercedes. Its intercession will be accepted. It is a speaker that testifies. For whoever the Holy Quran intercedes on the Day of Judgement, its intercession for him will be accepted. He about whom the Holy Quran speaks ill on the Day of Judgement shall testify to it. On the Day of Judgement, an announcer will announce: 'Beware! Everyone who sow a crop is in distress except those who sow (the seeds) of the Holy Quran." Therefore, you should be among the sowers of the Holy Quran and of its followers. Make it your guide towards Allah. Seek its advice for yourselves. Ddo not trust your views against it and regard your desires in the matter of the Holy Quran as deceitful.

About the believers and their good deeds, and the hypocrites and their bad deeds

Action! Action! Then (look at) the end results (of your actions and remain) steadfast. Steadfast! Thereafter, (exercise) endurance. Endurance and piety, piety! You have an objective. Proceed towards your objective. You have a sign. Take guidance from your sign. Islam has an objective. Proceed towards its objective. Proceed towards Allah by fulfilling His rights which He has enjoined upon you. He has clearly stated His demands. I am a witness for you and shall plead for excuses on your behalf on the Day of Judgement.

Beware! What had been ordained has occurred, and that which had been destined has come to pass. I am speaking to you with the promise and pleas of Allah.

Allah the Sublime has said the following: "Verily, those who say: 'Our Master is Allah! and who persevere rightly, the angels descend upon them (saying): 'Fear not, nor grieve and receive the glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised'" (Holy Quran, 41: 30).

You have said, "Our Master is Allah;" so, remain steadfast to His Book, to the way of His command, and to the virtuous course of worshiping Him. Thereafter, do not go out of it, do not introduce

innovation in it, and do not turn away from it because those who shrink from this course will be cut off from (the mercy of) Allah on the Day of Judgement.

Beware of corrupting your manners and altering them. Maintain one stand. A man should control his tongue because the tongue is obstinate with its master. By Allah, I do not find fear of Allah benefitting a man who practices such fear unless he controls his tongue. Certainly the tongue of a believer is at the back of his heart, while the heart of a hypocrite is at the back of his tongue. When a believer intends to say anything, he thinks it over in his mind. If it is good, he discloses it, but if it is bad, he keeps it concealed. A hypocrite articulates whatever comes to his tongue, without knowing what is in his favor and what goes against him.

The Prophet of Allah (ص) said the following: "The belief of a person cannot be firm unless his heart is firm, and his heart cannot be firm unless his tongue is firm." So, anyone of you can manage to meet Allah, the Sublime, in such a status that his hands are not smeared with the blood of Muslims and their property and his tongue are safe from exposition, he will do so.

Following the Sunnah and Refraining from Innovation

Be informed, O servants of Allah, that a believer should regard lawful this year what he regarded lawful the past year and should consider unlawful this year what he considered unlawful in the past year. Certainly people's innovation cannot make lawful for you what has been declared as unlawful. Rather, lawful is that which Allah has made lawful, and unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful. You have already tested the matters and tried them; you have been admonished by those before you. Illustrations have been drawn for you, and you have been called to clear facts. Only a deaf man can remain deaf to all this, and only a blind man can remain blind to all this.

He whom Allah does not allow to benefit from trials and experiences cannot benefit from preaching. He will be confronted by losses as he witnesses them, so much so that he will approve what is bad and disapprove what is good. People are of two categories; followers of the Sharī`a (religious laws) and followers of innovations to which Allah has not given any testimony by way of Sunnah or the light of any plea.

Guidance from the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran is the strong rope of Allah and the trustworthy means to reach out to Him. It contains the blossoming of the heart and the springs of knowledge. For the heart, there is no other gloss than the Holy Quran, although those who remembered it have passed away while those who forgot or pretended to have forgotten it have remained. If you see anything good, give your support to it, but if you see evil, avoid it because the Messenger of Allah (ص) used to say: "O son of Adam! Do good and shun evil; by doing so, you will be treading the Path correctly."

Categories of Oppression

Be informed that injustice is of three kinds: 1) the injustice that will not be forgiven; 2)one, that will not be left unquestioned and 3) the one that will be forgiven without being questioned. The injustice that will not be forgiven is duality of Allah. Allah has said the following: "Verily, Allah does not forgive that (anything) be associated with Him" (Holy Qurān, 4: 48, 116). The injustice that will be forgiven is the injustice one does to his own self by committing minor sins. The injustice that will not be left unquestioned is the injustice of men against other men. The retribution in such a case is severe. It is not wounding with knives, nor striking with whips, but it is so severe that all these things are insignificant compared to it. You should, therefore, avoid alteration with regard to Allah's religion, for your unity with regard to something right which you dislike is better than your disunity with regard to something wrong that you like. Certainly, Allah, the Glorified One, has not given any person, whether among the dead or among the living, anything good from disunity.

O people! Blessed is the man whose own shortcomings keep him away from (looking into) the shortcomings of others. Also blessed is the man who is confined to his house, who eats his meal, buries himself in obedience to his Lord and weeps over his sins, so he keeps himself thus busy while people are safe from his harm.

Sermon 176

About the Two Arbiters (Following the Battle of Siffīn).

Your party decided to select two persons, so we took their pledge that they would adhere to the Holy Quran and would not commit excesses, that their tongues should be with it and their hearts should

follow it. But they deviated from it, abandoned what was right although they had it before their very eyes. Wrong-doing was their desire and going astray was their conduct. Although we had settled with them to decide with justice, to act according to what is right and without the interference of their evil views and wrong judgement. Now that they have abandoned the course of right, coming out with just the opposite of what was settled, we have strong grounds (to reject their verdict).

Sermon 177

Praising Allah, Transience of this World and Causes of the Decline of Allah's Blessings (Delivered at the Beginning of His Caliphate after the Killing of Othman) .

One condition does not prevent Him from (getting into) another condition, time does not change Him, place does not locate Him and the tongue cannot describe Him. The number of drops of water, of stars in the sky, or of currents of winds in the air, are not unknown to Him, nor are the movements of ants on rocks, or the resting places of grubs in the dark night. He knows the places where leaves fall and the secret movements of the eyes.

I testify that there is no god but Allah Who has no equal, Who is not doubted, Whose religion is not denied and Whose creativeness is not questioned. My testimony is like that of a man whose intention is free, whose conscience is clear, whose belief is pure and whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy. I also testify that Muhammad (ص) is His servant and Messenger, the chosen one from among His creations, the one selected for explaining His realities, chosen for His honors and to convey His sacred messages. Through him, the signs of guidance have been lit and the gloom of blindness (misguidance) has been dispelled.

O people! Surely this world deceives him who yearns for it and who is attracted to it. It does not behave niggardly with him who aspires for it and overpowers him who overpowers it. By Allah, no people are deprived of the lively pleasures of life after having enjoyed them except as a result of sins committed by them because certainly Allah is not unjust to His creatures. Even then, when calamities descend upon people and pleasures depart from them, they turn towards Allah with a true intention and the feeling in their hearts that He will return to them everything that has fled away from them, that He will cure all their ills.

I fear about you lest you should fall into ignorance (that prevailed before the mission of the Prophet [ص]). In the past, there were certain matters in which you were deflected, and in my view, you were not worthy of admiration. But if your previous status could be returned to you, then you will become virtuous. I can only strive; but if I were to speak, I will (only) say: May Allah forgive your past actions.

Sermon 178

Di'bil al-Yemeni asked Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) whether he had seen Allah. The Imam (ع) then replied, "Do I worship One Whom I have not seen?!" The man then inquired, "How have you seen Him?" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied as follows :.

Eyes do not see Him face-to-face, but hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief. He is near to things but not (physically) contiguous. He is far from them but not (physically) separate. He speaks but not with reflection. He intends, but not with preparation. He molds, but not with (the assistance of) limbs. He is subtle but cannot be said as being concealed. He is great but cannot be said to be haughty. He sees but the faculty of vision cannot be attributed to Him. He is Merciful, but this cannot be attributed to a weakness of heart. Faces bow down before His greatness and hearts tremble out of fear of Him.

Sermon 179

Condemning His Disobedient Men

I praise Allah for whatever matter He ordained, for whatever action He destines, and for my trial with you, O folks who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call upon! If you are at ease, you engage in (conceited) conversations, but if you are faced with battle, you show weakness. If people agree on one Imam, you taunt each other. If you are faced with an arduous matter, you turn away from it. May the others (your foes) have no father! What are you waiting for with regard to your endeavor, when fighting for your rights? For you there is either death or disgrace. By Allah! If my day (of death) comes, and it is sure to come, it will cause separation between me and you, although I am sick of your company and feel lonely while being in your company.

May Allah deal with you! Is there any religion which may unite you?! Do not you have any sense of shame that may sharpen you? Is it not

strange that Mu`awiyah calls upon some rude low people and they follow him without any support or grant, but when I call upon you, although you are the promoters of Islam, the (worthy) survivors of the people, with support and grants, yet you run away from me and oppose me?! Truly, there is nothing between us which I like and you, too, like, or anything with which I am angry and you may also unite against it. What I love most is death. I have taught you the Holy Quran, clarified to you its arguments, informed you of that with which you were ignorant and made you swallow what you were spitting out. Even a blind man will have been able to see and he who was sleeping will have been awakened. How ignorant of Allah is their leader, Mu`awiyah, and their mentor, the son of an-Nabighah?[179] These five persons were (1) al-Asi ibn Wa'il, (2) Abu Lahab, (3) Umayyah ibn Khalaf, (4) Hisham ibn al-Mughirah and (5) Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. (Ibn Abd Rabbih, Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 2, p. 120; Ibn Tayfur, Balaghat an-Nisa', p. 27; Ibn Hijjah, Thamarat al-Awraq, Vol. 1, p. 132; Safwat, Jamharat Khutab al-Arab, Vol. 2, p. 363; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 6, pp. 283-285, 291; al-Halabi, Al-Sira, Vol. 1, p. 46).[1]

Sermon 180

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent one of his men to bring him news of a group of the army of Kufa who had decided to join the Kharijites but were afraid of him.[1] When the man came back, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him: "Are they satisfied and staying or feeling weak and going astray?" The man replied, "They have gone away, O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib!" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

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[179]An-Nabighah(the genius) is the surname of Layla daughter of Harmalah al-Anaziyyah, mother of `Amr ibn al-As. The reason for attributing him to his mother is her common reputation in the matter. When Arwa daughter of al-Harith ibn Abdul-Muttalib went to Mu`awiyah, during the conversation, when Amr ibn al-As intervened, she said to him: "O son of an-Nabighah, you too dare speak, although your mother was known publicly and was a singer of Mecca. That is why five persons claimed you (as a son) and when she was asked she admitted that five people had visited her and that you should be regarded as the son of him resembled most. You must have resembled al-As ibn Wa'il and, therefore, you came to be known as his son.

[180]A man from the tribe of Banu Najiyah named al-Khirrit ibn Rashid an-Naji was on Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's side in the battle of Siffin, but after arbitration, he became rebellious and, coming to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) with thirty persons, said the following: "By Allah, I will no more obey your command, nor offer prayers behind you and shall leave you tomorrow,"

May Allah's mercy remain away from them as in the case of Thamud. Be informed that when the spears are hurled towards them and the swords strike their heads, they will repent their deeds. Surely today Satan has scattered them and tomorrow he will deny having anything to do with them and will abandon them. They have departed from guidance and returned to misguidance and blindness. They have turned away from truth and fallen into wrong; such suffices (for their chastisement).

Sermon 181

It has been related by Nawf al-Bikali that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon at Kufa standing on a stone which Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi had placed for him. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had a woollen apparel on his body, the belt of his sword was made of leaves and the sandals on his feet too were of palm leaves. His forehead had a hardened spot like that a camel (on its knee, due to many and long prostrations). About Allah's attributes, His creatures and His being above physical limitations :

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whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: "You should first take into account the grounds underlying this Arbitration and discuss it with me. If you are satisfied, do as you will." He said he would return the next day to discuss the matter. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) then cautioned him thus: "Look, upon going from here, do not get mislead by others, and do not adopt any other course. If you have the will to understand, I will get you out of this wrong path and put you on the course of guidance." After this conversation, the man went away, but his countenance indicated that he was bent on rebelling and that he would not see reason by any means. And so it happened. He stuck to his point. Having reached his place, he said to his tribesmen, "Since we are determined to abandon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), there is no use going to him. We should do what we have decided to do." On this occasion, Abdullah ibn Qu'ayn al-Azdi also went to them to inquire. But when he came to know the situation, he asked Mudrik ibn ar-Rayyan an-Naji to speak to him and to advise him of the ruinous consequence of this rebellion, whereupon Mudrik assured him that this man would not be allowed to take any step. Consequently, `Abdullah came back satisfied and related the whole matter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on returning the next day. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "Let us see what happens when he comes." But when the appointed hour passed and the man did not turn up, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) asked Abdullah to go and see what the matter was and what the cause for the delay was. On reaching there, Abdullah found that all of them had left. When he returned to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the Imam delivered this sermon. The fate that befell al-Khirrit ibn Rashīd an-Naji has been stated in Sermon 44.

Praise be to Allah to Whom is the return of all creation and the end of all matters. We render Him praise for the greatness of His generosity, the charity of His proofs, the increase of His bounty... And for His favors, a praise which may fulfil His right, repay His thanks, take (us) near His reward and produce an increase in His kindness. We seek His help like one who is hopeful of His bounty, desirous of His benefit and confident of His warding (calamities) off, one who acknowledges His gifts and is obedient to Him in word and in deed. We believe in Him like one who reposes hope in Him with conviction, inclines to Him as a believer, humbles himself before Him obediently, believes in His Oneness exclusively, regards Him as great, acknowledging His dignity and seeks refuge with Him with inclination and exertion.

Allāh, the most Glorified One, has not been born so that someone could be (His) partner in glory. Nor has He begotten anyone so as to be inherited. Time has not preceded Him. Increase and decrease do not apply to Him. But He has manifested Himself to our understanding when we observe His strong control and firm decree. Among the proofs of His creation is the creation of the skies which are fastened without pillars, standing without support. He called them and they responded obediently and humbly without being reluctant or loathsome. If they had not acknowledged His being the Lord and not obeyed Him, He would not have made them the place for His throne, the abode of His angels and the destination of the pure utterances and righteous deeds of the creatures.

He has made the stars in the skies by way of signs for the guidance of travelers who traverse the various routes of the earth. The gloom of the dark curtains of the night does not prevent the flame of their light, nor do the veils of blackish nights have the power to turn back the light of the moon when it spreads in the skies. Glory to Allah from Whom neither the blackness of dark dusk nor of gloomy nights in the low parts of the earth or on high dim mountains is hidden, nor the thundering of clouds on the horizons of the skies, nor the sparking of lightning in the clouds, nor the falling of leaves blown away from their falling places by the winds of hurricanes or by downpour from the sky. He knows where the drops fall and where they settle, where the grubs leave their trails or drag themselves, what livelihood will suffice the mosquitoes and what a female bears in its womb.

Praise be to Allah Who exists before the existence of the seat, the throne, the sky, the earth, the jinns or the humans. He cannot be perceived by imagination nor measured by comprehension. He who pleads to Him does not divert Him (from others), nor does giving away cause Him diminution. He does not see by means of an eye, nor can He be confined to a place. He cannot be said to have companions. He does not create with (the help of) limbs. He cannot be perceived by senses. He cannot be thought of as we think of people.

It is He who spoke to Musa (Moses) clearly and showed Him His great signs without the use of bodily parts, the means of speech or the uvula. O you who exert yourself in describing Allah! If you are serious, then (first try to) describe Gabriel, Michael or the host of angels who are close (to Allah) in the receptacles of sublimity. But their heads are bent downwards and their wits are perplexed as to how to assign limits (of definition) to the Highest Creator. This is so because those things can only be perceived through qualities which have shape and parts and which succumb to death after reaching the end of their times. There is no god but He. He has lighted every darkness with His glory and has darkened every light with the darkness (of death).

An Account of Bygone Peoples and Learning from Them

I admonish you, servants of Allah, to fear Allah Who clothed you well and bestowed upon you an abundance of sustenance. If there was anyone who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death, it was Sulayman ibn Dawud (ع) [Solomon son of David] who was given control over the domain of the jinns and men along with Prophethood and a great status with Allah. But when he exhausted appointed ration (of this world) and his (fixed) time expired, the bow of destruction shot him with an arrow of death. His mansions became vacant and his habitations became empty. Another group of people inherited them. Certainly, the by-gone centuries have a lesson for you.

Where are the Amalekites[181] and the sons of the Amalekites? Where are the Pharaohs?[182] But when his empire in the end was

[181]History shows that very often the ruin and destruction of peoples has been due to their oppression and open wickedness and profligacy. Consequently, communities which had extended their sway over all the corners of the populated world and had flown their flags in the East and West of the globe disappeared from the surface of the earth like a wrong word, on disclosure of their vicious actions and evil doings. The Amalekites were ancient nomadic

destroyed in a few moments. Neither his status nor his servants could come in the way of its destruction, nor could the vastness of his realm

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tribesmen, or a group of tribes, described in the Old Testament as relentless enemies of Israel, even though they were closely related to Ephraim, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Their name is derived from Amalek, who is celebrated in Arabian tradition but cannot be identified. The region over which they ruled extended from southern Judea and probably extended into northern Arabia. The Amalekites harassed the Hebrews during the latter's exodus from Egypt, attacking them at Rephidim (near Mt. Sinai), where they were defeated by Joshua. They also filled out the ranks of the nomadic raiders defeated by Gideon and were condemned to annihilation by Samuel. The Amelekites, whose final defeat occurred in the time of Hezekiah, were the object of a perpetual curse. (See *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* [Micropedia], Vol. 1, p. 288, ed. 1973 - 1974]; also see [for further reference] the *Encyclopedia Americana* [International Edition] Vol. 1, p. 651, ed. 1975).

[182]"Pharaoh" is a Hebrew word form of the Egyptian "per-Ao", the great house, signifying the royal palace, an epithet applied in the new Kingdom and after, as a title of respect, to the Egyptian king himself. In the 22nd dynasty, this title was added to the king's personal name. In official documents, the full titulary of the Egyptian king contained five names. The first and the oldest identified him as the incarnation of the falcon god Horus. It was often written inside a square called 'serekh", depicting the facade of the archaic palace. The second name, "two ladies", placed him under the protection of Nekh-bet and Buto, the vulture and Uraeus (snake) goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. The third, "golden Horus", originally signified perhaps Horus victorious over his enemies. The last two names, written within a ring or cartouche, are generally referred to as the praenomen and nomen and were the ones most commonly used. The praenomen, preceded by the hieroglyph meaning "King of Upper and Lower Egypt", usually contained a reference to the king's Unique relationship with the sun god, Re, while the fifth, or nomen, was preceded by the hieroglyph for "son of Re", or by that for Master of the Two Lands. The last name was given him at birth, the rest at his coronation. (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica* [Micropodia], Vol. VII, p. 927, ed. 1973-1974; also see [for further reference] the *Encyclopedia Americana*, [International Edition], Vol. 21, p. 707, ed. 1975).

Among the Pharaohs was Pharaoh who was contemporary to Prophet Musa (ع). His pride, egotism, insolence and haughtiness were such that by making the claim "I am your supreme god," he deemed himself to be holding sway over all other powers of the world. He was confused into misunderstanding that no power could wrest the realm and government from his hands. The Holy Quran has narrated his claim of "I and no one else" in the following verse: *And Pharaoh proclaimed to his people: "O my people! Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers flow below me; What! behold you not? (Holy Quran 43: 51)*

prevent it. Rather, the waves of the very streams of which he was extremely proud, wrapped him in and dispatched his soul to Hell, throwing the body on the bank to serve as a lesson for the whole of creation. Where are the people of the cities of ar-Rass[183] who killed the prophets, destroyed the traditions of the holy messengers and revived the traditions of the despots? Where are those who advanced with armies, defeated thousands, mobilized forces and populated cities?

Part of the same sermon about Imam al-Mahdi (ع)

He will be wearing the amour of wisdom, which he will have secured with all its conditions, such as full attention towards it, (complete) knowledge of and exclusive devotion to it. For him, it is like a thing which he had lost and which he was then seeking, or a need which he was trying to fulfil. If Islam is in trouble, he will feel forlorn like a traveler and like a (tired) camel beating the end of its tail, with its neck flattened on the ground. He is the last of Allah's proofs and one of the vicegerents of His prophets.

On the Method of His Ruling and Grief over the Martyrdom of His Companions

O people! I have divulged to you advice which the prophets used to preach to their peoples, and I have conveyed to you what the vicegerents (of the prophets) conveyed for the benefit of those coming after them. I tried to train you with my whip but you could not be straightened. I drove you with admonition but you did not acquire proper behavior. May Allah deal with you! Do you want an Imam other than me to take you on the (right) path and show you the correct way?

Beware, the things in this world which were forward have become things of the past, and those which were behind are going ahead.

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[183]Who were the people of the cities of ar-Rass? In the same way as above, the people of ar-Rass were killed and destroyed for disregarding the preaching and the call of their prophet and for their rebellion and disobedience. About them the Holy Qur'ān says the following: *And the (tribes of) }d and Thamud, and the inhabitants of ar-Rass, and generations between them, in great number. And unto each of them We did give examples and everyone (of them) We did destroy with utter destruction (Holy Quran 25: 38,39); Belied (also) before them were the people of Noah and the dwellers of ar-Rass and Thamud, and }d and Pharaoh, and the brethren of Lot, and the dwellers of the Wood and the people of Tubba'; all belied the Messengers, so My promise (of the doom)was proved true (Holy Quran 50: 12-14).*

The virtuous people of Allah have made up their minds to leave and they have traded, with a little perishable (pleasure) of this world, a lot of such (reward) in the next world that will remain forever. What loss did our brothers, whose blood was shed in Siffin, suffer by not being alive today? Only that they are not suffering from choking upon swallowing and not drinking turbid water. By Allah, surely they have met Allah and He has bestowed upon them their rewards; He has lodged them in safe houses after their (having suffered) fear.

Where are my brethren who took the (right) path and trod in righteousness/ Where is Ammar? Where is ibn at-Tayyihan? Where is Dhul-Shahadatayn? And where are others like them[7] from among their comrades who had pledged themselves to remain steadfast till death and whose (severed) heads were taken to the wicked enemy?

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wiped his hand over his auspicious, honored beard and wept for a long time, then he went on to say:

O brothers who recited the Holy Quran and strengthened it, thought over their obligation and fulfilled it, revived the Sunnah and destroyed innovation! When they were called to jihad, they responded and trusted in their leader then followed him.

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Shouted the Following at the Top of His Voice:

Al-Jihad, al-Jihad! O servants of Allah! By Allah, I am mobilizing the army today. He who desires to proceed towards Allah should come forward.

Nawf says the following: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) put Hussain (ع) in charge of (a force of) ten thousand, Qays ibn Sa`d (mercy of Allah be upon him) over ten thousand, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari over ten thousand and others over different numbers, intending to return to Siffin. But on Friday, the Imam (ع) did not appear in public again; the damned Ibn Muljim (may Allah curse him) killed him. Consequently, the armies came back and were left like sheep who had lost their shepherd while wolves were snatching them away from all sides.

Ammar ibn Yasir ibn Amir al-Madhhaji al-Makhzumi (Madhhaj being an ally of Banu Makhzum) was one of the earliest converts to Islam and the first Muslim to build a mosque in his own house in which he used

to worship Allah (Al-Tabaqat, Vol. 3, Part 1, p. 178; Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 4, p. 46; Ibn Kathir, Tarikh, Vol. 7, p.311).

Ammar accepted Islam along with his father Yasir and his mother Sumayya. They suffered great atrocities at the hands of the tribesmen of Quraish due to their conversion to Islam to such an extent that Ammar lost his parents, and they were the first martyrs in Islam.

Ammar was among those who immigrated to Abyssinia and the earliest immigrants (Muhajirun) to Medina. He was present in the battle of Badr and all other battles as well as places of assembly by the Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (ص). He demonstrated his mighty support in all Islamic struggles in the best way.

Many traditions are narrated from the Holy Prophet (ص) about Ammar regarding his virtues, outstanding traits and glorious deeds such as the tradition which Aisha and others have narrated that the Holy Prophet (ص) himself had said that Ammar was filled with faith from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. (Ibn Majah, Sunan, Vol. 1, p. 65; Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliya', Vol. 1, p. 139; al-Haytami, Majma' az-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, p.295; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1137; Al-Isaba, Vol. 2, p. 512).

In another tradition, the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following about Ammar:.

"Ammar is with the truth and the truth is with Ammar. He turns wherever the truth turns. Ammar is as close to me as an eye is close to the nose. Alas! A rebellious group will kill him" (Al-Tabaqat, Vol. 3, part 1, p. 187; Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 392; Ibn Hisham, Sira, Vol. 2, p. 143; Ibn Kathir, Tarikh, Vol. 7, pp. 268-270).

Also in the decisive and widely known tradition which al-Bukhari (in his Sahih, Vol. 8, pp. 185-186), at-Tirmithi (in Al-Jami' Sahih, Vol. 5, p. 669); Ahmed ibn Hanbal (in Al-Musnad, Vol. 2, pp. 161, 164, 206; Vol. 3, pp. 5, 22, 28, 91; Vol. 4, pp. 197, 199; Vol. 5, pp. 215, 306, 307; Vol. 6, pp. 289, 300, 311, 315) and all the narrators of Islamic traditions and historians transmitted through twenty-five Companions that the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following about Ammar:.

"Alas! A rebellious group which swerves from the truth will murder Ammar. Ammar will be calling them towards Paradise and they

will be calling him towards Hell. His killer and those who strip him of arms and clothing will all be in Hell."

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (in Tahthib al-Tahthib, Vol. 7, p. 409; Al-Isaba, Vol. 2, p.512) and al-Sayyuti (in Al-Khasa'is al-Kubra, Vol. 2, p. 140) say: "The narration of this (above mentioned) tradition is mutawatir (i.e. narrated successively by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about its authenticity).

Ibn Abdul-Barr (in Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1140) says the following:.

"The narration followed uninterrupted succession from the Holy Prophet (ص) saiying the following: "A rebellious group will murder Ammar," and this is a prediction of the Prophet's secret knowledge and the sign of his Prophethood. This tradition is among the most authentic and the most rightly ascribed traditions.

After the death of the Holy Prophet (ص), Ammar was one of the closest adherents and best supporters of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) during the reign of the first three Caliphs. During the caliphate of Othman when the Muslim population protested against Othman's policy regarding a number of issues including the distribution of the Public Treasury (baytul-mal) Othman said at a public assembly that, "The money which was in the treasury was sacred and belonged to Allah and that he (as being the successor of the Prophet [ص]) had the right to dispose of them as he thought fit. He (Othman) threatened and cursed all those who presumed to censure or murmur at what he said. Upon this, Ammar ibn Yasir boldly declared his disapprobation and began to charge him with his inveterate propensity to ignore the interests of the general public; accused him with reviving the heathenish customs abolished by the Prophet (ص), whereupon Othman ordereded him to be beaten. Imediately some Umayyads, the relatives of the Caliph fell upon the venerable Ammar and the Caliph himself, kicking the lattedr with his shoes (on his feet) on Ammar's testicles and afflicted him with a hernia. Amma became unconscious for three days and was taken care of by Umm al-Mu'minin [mother of the Faithful] Umm Salamah in her own house (al-Baladhiri, Ansab al-Ashraf, Vol. 5, pp. 48, 54, 88; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 3, pp. 47-52; Al-Imamah wal-Siyasa, Vol. 1, pp. 35-36; Al-`Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, p. 307; Al-Tabaqat, Vol. 3, Part 1, p. 185; Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. 2, p. 271).

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) became Caliph, Ammar was one of his most sincere supporters. Ammar participated fully in all social, political and military activities during this period, especially in the first battle (the Battle of Jamal) and in the second (the battle of Siffin).

However, Ammar was martyred on the 9th of Safar, 37 A.H., in the battle of Siffin when he was over ninety years old. On the day Ammar ibn Yasir achieved martyrdom, he turned his face to the sky and said the following:.

"O Lord! Surely You are aware that if I know that You wish that I should plunge myself into this River (the Euphrates) and be drowned, I will do it. O Lord! Surely You know that if I knew that You would be pleased if I put my scimitar on my chest (to hit my heart) and press it so hard that it comes out of my back, I would do it. O Lord! I do not think there is anything more pleasant to You than fighting this sinful group. If I knew that any action at all is more pleasing to You, I would do it."

Abu Abd ar-Rahman al-Salami narrates the following:.

"We were present with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) at Siffin when I saw Ammar ibn Yasir not turning his face in any direction, or towards any valley of Siffin, but the companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) were following him as if he was a sign for them. Then I heard Ammar say the following to Hashim ibn Utbah (al-Mirqal): 'O Hashim! Rush into the enemy's ranks, for Paradise is under the shade of the sword! Today, I shall meet the beloved one, Muhammad (ص) and his party.'

"Then he said the following: 'By Allah! If they put us to fight (and pursue us) to the date-palms of Hajar (a town in Bahrain [i.e. if they pursue us along all the Arabian desert] nevertheless) we know surely that we are right and they are wrong.'

"Then he (Ammar) continued (addressing the enemies) thus:
'We struck you so that you may (believe in) its (Holy Quran\s) revelation; And today we strike you to (believe in) its interpretation; Such strike as to remove heads from their resting places; And to make the friend forget his sincere friend, until the truth returns to its (right) course.'"

The narrator says the following: "I did not see the Holy Prophet's companions killed at any time as many as they were killed on that day."

Then Ammar spurred his horse, entered the battlefield and began fighting. He persistently chased the enemy, launching one attack after another, raising challenging slogans till at last a group of mean-spirited Syrians surrounded him from all sides. A man named Abul-Ghadiyah al-Juhari (al-Fazari) inflicted such a wound upon him that Ammar could not withstand it. Ammar returned to his camp and asked for water. A tumbler of milk was brought to him. When Ammar looked at the tumbler, he said the following: "The Messenger of Allah had said the right thing." People asked him what he meant by those words. He said, "The Messenger of Allah (ص) informed me that my last sustenance in the life of this world would be milk." Then he took that tumbler of milk in his hands, drank the milk and surrendered his life to Allah, the Almighty. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) came to know of his death, he came to Ammar's side, put his (Ammar's) head on his own lap and recited the following elegy to mourn his death:

Surely any Muslim who is not distressed at the killing of the son of Yasir and is not afflicted by this grievous misfortune does not have a true faith.

May Allah shower His mercy on Ammar the day he embraced Islam; may Allah shower His mercy on Ammar the day he was killed, and may Allah shower His mercy on Ammar the day he is raised to life.

Certainly, I found Ammar (on such level) that three companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) could not be named unless he was the fourth, and four of them could not be mentioned unless he was the fifth...

There was none among the Holy Prophet's companions who doubted this: Not only was Paradise once or twice bestowed upon Ammar, but that he gained his claim to it (a number of times). May Paradise give enjoyment to Ammar.

Certainly, it was said (by the Holy Prophet [ص]): "Surely, Ammar is with the truth, and the truth is with Ammar; he turns wherever the truth turns; his killer will certainly be lodged in hell."

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) stepped forward and offered the funeral prayers for Ammar and with his own hands he buried him with his clothes still on.

Ammar's death caused a good deal of commotion in the ranks of Mu`awiyah, too, because there a large number of prominent people fighting on the side of Mu`awiyah under the impression hat he was fighting Imam

Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) for a just cause. These people were aware of the saying of the Holy Prophet (ص) that Ammar would be killed by a group that would be on the wrong track. When they observed that Ammar had been killed by Mu`awiyah's army, they became convinced that they were on the wrong side and that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was definitely on the track. This agitation thus caused among leaders as well as in the rank and file of Mu`awiyah's army was quelled by the latter with the argument that it was Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who brought Ammar to the battlefield and, therefore, it was he who was responsible for Ammar's death. When Mu`awiyah's argument was mentioned before Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the Imām said that it was as if the Prophet (ص) was responsible for killing [his brave uncle] Hamzah since he himself had brought him to the battlefield of Uhud! (al-Tabari, Tarīkh, Vol. 1, pp. 3316-3322; Vol. 3, pp. 2314-2319; Ibn Sa`d, Al-Tabaqat, Vol. 3, Part 1, pp. 176-189; Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 3, pp. 308-312; Ibn Kathir, Tarikh, Vol. 7, pp. 267-272; al-Minqari, Siffin, pp. 320-345; Ibn Abdul-Barr, Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, pp. 1135-1140; Vol. 4, p. 1725; Ibn al-Athir, Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 4, pp. 43-47; Vol. 5, p. 267; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 5, pp. 252-258; Vol. 8, pp. 10-28; Vol. 10, pp. 102-107, al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 384-394; Ibn Abd Rabbih, Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, pp. 340-343; al-Mas`udi, Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. 2, pp. 381-382, al-Haytami, Majama' az-Zawa'id, Vol. 7, pp. 238-244; Vol. 9, pp. 291-298; al-Baladhiri, Ansab al-Ashraf (Biography of Amir al-Mu'minin [ع]), pp. 310-319.

Abul-Haytham (Malik) ibn at-Tayyihan al-Ansari was one of the twelve chiefs (naqibs [of the Ansar] who attended the fair and met at al-Aqabah the first and the second times. It was there that he swore the pledge of allegiance to the Holy Prophet of Islam (ص). He was present also during the battle of Badr and in all other battles in addition to all places of assembly by the Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (ص). He was also among the sincere supporters of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on whose side he fought during the Battles of Jamal and of Siffin where he was martyred (Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 4, p. 1773; Siffin, p. 365; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 4, p. 274; Vol. 5, p. 318; Al-Isaba, Vol. 3, p. 341;

Vol. 4, pp. 312-313; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 10, pp. 107-108; Ansab al-Ashraf, p. 319).

Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari [who is referred to above] is known as "Dhul-Shahadatayn" (the man with the two testimonials) because the Holy Prophet (ص) considered his testimony equivalent to that of two witnesses. He was present in the battle of Badr and in other battles as well as in the places of assembly of the Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (ص). He is counted among the earliest of those who showed their adherence to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). He was also present in the Battles of Jamal and Siffin. Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abu Layla narrated that he saw a man in the battle of Siffin fighting the enemy valiantly, and when he protested against his action, the man said the following:.

"I am Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari. I have heard the Holy Prophet (ص) saying, 'Fight, fight, on the side of Ali'" (orator al-Baghdadi, Muwaddih Awham al-Jam' wal-Tafriq, Vol. 1, p. 277).

Khuzaymah was martyred in the battle of Siffīn soon after the martyrdom of Ammar ibn Yasir.

Sayf ibn `Umar al-Usaydi (the well known liar) has fabricated another Khuzaymah and claimed that the one who was martyred in the battle of Siffin was this one and not the one titled "Dhul-Shahadatayn". Al-Tabari has quoted this fabricated story from Sayf either intentionally or; otherwise, and through him this story has affected some other historians who quoted from or relied on al-Tabari. For further reference, see al-'Askari, Khamsun wa miah sahabi mukhtalaq [one hundred and fifty fabricated companions], Vol. 2, pp. 175-189.

After having rejected this fabrication, Ibn Abul-Hadid adds (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 10, pp. 109-110) that: "Furthermore, what is the need for those who, in order to defend Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), boast of an abundance of statements by Khuzaymah, Abul-Haytham, Ammar and others? If people treat this man (Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع]) with justice and look at him with healthy eyes, they will certainly realize that should he be alone (on one side) and all other people (on the other side) fighting him, he will still be on the side of the truth while all the rest will be wrong" (Al-Tabaqat, Vol. 3, Part 1, pp. 185, 188; Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 385, 397; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 2, p. 114; Vol. 4, p. 47; Al-

Isti`ab, Vol. 2, p. 448; al-Tabari, Vol. 3, pp. 2316, 2319, 2401; Al-Kamil, Vol. 3, p. 325; Siffin, pp. 363, 398; Ansab al-Ashraf, pp. 313-314).

Among the people who were present during the Battle of Jamal on the side of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) were one hundred and thirty Badris (those who participated in the battle of Badr with the Holy Prophet [ص]) and seven hundred of those who were present in the Pledge of ar-Ridwan (Bay'at al-Ridwan) which took place under a tree (al-Dhahbi, Tarikh al-Islam, Vol. 2, p. 171; Khalifah ibn Khayyat, Tarikh, Vol. 1, p. 164). Those who were killed in the Battle of Jamal from among the supporters of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) numbered about five hundred (some said that the number of martyrs were more than that). But on the side of the people of Jamal, twenty thousand were killed (Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, p. 326).

Among those who were present in the Battle of Siffin on the side of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), there were eighty Badris and eight hundred of those who swore to the Holy Prophet (ص) the Pledge of al-Ridwan (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 104; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1138; Al-Isaba, Vol. 2, p. 389; Tarīkh, al-Ya`qubi, Vol. 2, p. 188).

On the side of Mu`awiyah, forty-five thousand were killed, and on the sides of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), twenty-five thousand. Among these martyrs (from the camp of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع]), there were twenty-five or twenty-six Badris and sixty-three or three hundred and three of the people of the Pledge of ar-Ridwan (Siffin, p. 558; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 2, p. 389; Ansab al-Ashraf, p. 322; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 10, p. 104; Abul-Fidā', Vol. 1, p. 175; Ibn al-Wardi, Tārīkh, Vol. 1, p. 240; Ibn Kathīr, Vol. 7, p. 275; Tārikh al-Khamīs, Vol. 2, p. 277).

Besides the distinguished and eminent companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), such as Ammar, "Dhul-Shahadatayn" and Ibn al-Tayyihan, those who were martyred in Siffin were:

i. Hashim ibn `Utbah ibn Abu Waqqas al-Mirqal. He was killed on the same day when Ammar was martyred. He was the bearer of the standard of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's army on that day.

ii. Abdullah ibn Budayl ibn al-Warqa al-Khuza'i. Sometimes, he was the right wing's Commander of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's army and sometimes the infantry's Commander.

Sermon 182

Praising Allah for His Bounties

Praise be to Allah Who is recognized without being seen and Who creates without weariness. He created everything with His Might, and He receives the devotion of rulers by virtue of His dignity. He exercises superiority over great men through His generosity. It is He who made His creation populate the world and sent to the jinns and human beings His messengers to clarify His Message for them, to warn them of taking it lightly, to present to them its examples, and to place before them a whole collection of matters containing lessons about the changing of health and sickness in life of this world, what is lawful and what is unlawful, and all that Allah has ordained for the obedient ones as well as for the disobedient, namely, Paradise and Hell, honor and disgrace, respectively. I extend my praise to His Being as He desires His creation to praise Him. He has fixed for everything a measure, for every measure a time limit, and for every time limit a record.

Part of the Same Sermon: the Greatness and Importance of the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran bids and forbids, remains silent and speaks. It is the Argument of Allah before His creation. He has taken from them a pledge (to act) upon it. He has perfected its glory and completed through it His creed. He let the Prophet (ص) leave this world once he had conveyed to the people all His commandments of guidance through the Holy Quran. You should, therefore, regard Allah as Great as He has held Himself Great because He has not concealed anything of His religion from you, nor has He left out anything which He likes or dislikes. He made for everything a clear sign (of guidance) and a definite indication, either prohibiting (us) from doing it or calling upon us to uphold it. What pleases Him is the same for now, in the past, and for all times to come.

You should know that He will not be pleased with you if you do anything with which He was displeased by those before you who committed it, and He will not be displeased with you for anything for which won His pleasure when acted upon by those before you. You are treading on a clear path and are speaking the same as the people before you had spoken. Allah suffices you for the achievement of your worldly needs. He has persuaded you to remain thankful (with your hearts) and has made it obligatory on you to mention Him with your tongues.

Warning Against the Punishment on the Day of Judgement

He has advised you to be pious, making piety the highest point of earning His pleasure and all that He requires from His creatures. You should, therefore, fear Allah in such a way as if you stand in front of Him. Your forelocks are in His grip and your change of condition is in His control. If you conceal a matter from anyone, you cannot conceal it from Him. If you disclose a matter, He will record it. For this, He has appointed honored guards (angels) who do not omit any rightful matter nor insert anything of their own. You should know that whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way to get out of troubles and (grant him) a light (to help him get) out of darkness. He will always keep him in whatever (condition) He wishes and will make him stay in a status of honor near Him, in the abode (of bliss)which He has made for Himself. The shade of this abode is His throne; its light is His glory, its visitors are His angels, and its companions are His prophets.

Therefore, hasten towards such a place of return and proceed to (your) ends (by collecting provision for the next world). Shortly, the expectations of the people will be cut short and death will overtake them, while the door of repentance will be closed for them. You are still in a place to which those who were before you have been wishing to return. In this world, which is not your [eternal] abode, you are just like a traveler in motion. You have been given the call to leave from here, and you have been ordered to collect provisions while you are still here. You should know that this thin skin cannot tolerate the Fire (of Hell). So, have pity on your own selves because you have already tried it in the tribulations of this world.

Have you ever seen how a person cries of the pain when he has been pricked with a thorn or who bleeds due to stumbling or whom hot sand has burnt? How will he feel when he is between two frying pans of Hell with stones all around, with Satan as his companion? Do you know that when Malik (the custodian of Hell) is angry with the fire, its parts begin to clash with each other (in rage), and when he scolds it, it leaps between the doors of Hell crying on account of his scolding?

O you old folks whom old age has made hoary, how will you feel when rings of fire touch the bones of your neck and when handcuffs hold you so hard that they eat away the flesh of your forearms? (Fear) Allah! (Fear) Allah! O crowd of men, while you are in good health before sickness (grips you), when you are in ease before hardship (overtakes you). You should aspire to release your necks before their mortgage is

foreclosed, and your eyes; thin down your bellies, use your feet (to go where you earn the Pleasure of Allah); spend your wealth (rather than hoard it); take your bodies and wear them out for the goodness of your own souls, and do not be niggardly about them because Allah, the most Glorified One, has said the following: "If you help (yourselves and others in the way) of Allah, He will (also) help you and will set your feet firm (on His Straight Path) (Holy Quran, 47: 7). And He, the most Sublime One, has said the following: "Who will loan unto Allah a goodly loan so that He may double it for him and for him shall be a noble recompense?" (Holy Quran, 57: 11).

He does not seek your support because of being weak, nor does He demand a loan from you because of being in need. He seeks your help, although He possesses all the armies of the skies and of the earth, and He is strong and wise. He seeks a loan from you, although He owns the treasures of the skies and of the earth, and He is rich and praiseworthy. (Rather) He intends to try you as to which of you performs good deeds. You should, therefore, be quick in performance of (good) deeds so that your way may be with His neighbors in His abode. He made His Prophet's companions from among these neighbors and made the angels visit them. He has honored their ears so that the sound of Hell-fire may never reach them, and He has afforded protection to their bodies from weariness and fatigue.

... That is the grace of Allah, He bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases, and Allah is the master of Mighty Grace (Holy Quran, 57: 21).

I say you hear me. I seek Allah's help for myself and for you. He suffices me, and He is the best dispenser (of bounties).

Sermon 183

One of the Kharijites, namely al-Burj ibn Mus'hir at-Ta'i, raised the call of "Command is fit for only Allah" in such a way that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard it. On hearing it he said the following:

Keep quiet, may Allah expose your ugliness, O you with the broken tooth! Certainly, by Allah, when the truth becomes manifest, even then, your personality is weak and your voice is loose. But when wrong began to shout loudly, you again shouted up like the (blown) horns of a kid.

Sermon 184

Praising Allah and His Wonderful Creatures

Praise be to Allah! He is such that senses cannot perceive Him, place cannot contain Him, eyes cannot see Him and veils cannot cover Him. He proves His eternity by the bringing His creation into existence and (also) by originating His creation. (He proves) His existence, and through their spirituality, He proves that there is nothing similar to Him. He is true to His promise. He is too Sublime to be unjust to His creatures. He stands by equity among His creation and implements justice over them in His commands. He provides testimony of His own being through the creation of things from ever, through their marks of incapability of His power and through their powerlessness against death of His eternity.

He is One, but not by counting. He is everlasting without any limit. He is existent without any support. Minds admit His existence without the need for the senses. Things which can be seen testify to Him without confronting Him. Imagination cannot encompass Him. He manifests Himself to the imagination with his help for the imagination, refusing to be conceived by the imagination. He has made imagination the arbiter. He is not "big" in the sense that volume is vast, so His body is also "big". Nor is He great in the sense that His limits should extend to the utmost, so His frame should be extensive. But He is 'big" in status and great in authority.

About the Holy Prophet (ص)

I testify that Muhammad (ص) is His slave, His chosen Prophet (ص) and His responsible trustee.May Allah bless him and his descendants. Allah sent him with undeniable proofs, with a clear success and an open path. So he conveyed the message, declaring the truth with it. He led the people on the (correct) path, established signs of guidance and minarets of light, making Islam's ropes strong and knots firm.

Part of the Same Sermon: About the Creation of Animal Species

Had they pondered over the greatness of His power and the vastness of His bounty, they would have returned to the right path and feared the punishment of the Fire. But hearts are sick and eyes are impure. Do they not see the small things which He has created, how He

strengthened their system and opened for them the hearing and the sight, making for them bones and skins? Look at the ant with its small body and delicate form. It can hardly be seen in the corner of the eye, nor by the perception of the imagination. Look and see how it moves on the earth and leaps at its sustenance. It carries the grain to its hole and deposits it in its place of repose. It collects during the summer for its winter and during strength for the period of its weakness. Its livelihood is guaranteed and it is fed to be fit. Allah, the Kind, does not forget it, and (Allah the Giver) does not deprive it, even though it may be in a dry stone or in fixed rocks.

If you have thought about its digestive tract, in its high and low parts, the carapace of its belly, its eyes and ears in its head..., you will be amazed at its creation, and you will feel it difficult to describe it. Exalted is He Who made it stand on its legs and erected it on its pillars (limbs). No other originator took part with Him in its origination, and no one else has any power to assist Him in its creation. If you tread on the paths of your imagination and let it reach its extremes, it will not lead you anywhere except to the fact that the Originator of the ant is the same as He Who is the Originator of the date-palm because everything has (the same) delicacy and detail, and every living being has little difference with another.

Creation of the Universe

In His creation, the big, the delicate, the heavy, the light, the strong, the weak are all equal.[184] So is the sky, the air, the winds and the water. Therefore, look at the sun, moon, vegetation, plants, water, stone, the difference of this night and day, the springing of the streams, the large number of the mountains, the height of their peaks, the diversity of languages and the variety of tongues. Then woe unto him who disbelieves in the One who ordains, who denies the Ruler! These believe that they are like grass for which there is no cultivator nor any maker for their own sundry shapes. They have not relied on any argument for what they assert,

[184]The meaning is: If the smaller thing in creation is examined, it will be found to contain all that which is found in the biggest creatures. Each will exhibit the same reflection of nature, workmanship and performance and the ratio of each to Allah's might and power will be the same, whether it be as small as an ant or as big as a palm tree. Is it not that making a small thing is easy for Him while the making of a big thing is difficult because the diversity of color, volume and quantity is just based on the dictates of His sagacity and expediency? As regarding creation itself, there is no difference among them. Therefore, this uniformity of creation is a proof of the Oneness and Unity of the Creator.

nor on any research for what they have heard. Can there be any construction without a constructor, or any offense without an offender?

The Wonderful Creation of the Locust

If you wish, you can tell about the locust (as well). Allah gave it two red eyes, lighted for them two moons like pupils, made for it small ears, opened for it a suitable mouth and gave it a keen sense, gave it two teeth to cut with and two sickle-like feet to grip with. The farmers are afraid of it in the matter of crops. Farmers cannot drive the locust away even though they may join together in their effort. The locust attacks the fields and satisfies its hunger although its body is not equal to a thin finger.

The Glory of Allah

Glorified is Allah before Whom everyone in the skies or on earth bows down in prostration willingly or unwillingly, submits to Him by placing his cheeks and face (on the dust), kneals before Him (in obedience) peacefully and humbly and hands over to Him full control in fear and apprehension.

The birds are bound by His commands. He knows the number of their feathers and their breaths. He has made their feet stand on water and on dry land. He has ordained their livelihoods. He knows their species: This is the crow, this is the eagle, this is the pigeon, and this is the ostrich. He called out every bird by its name (while creating it) and provided it with its livelihood. He created heavy clouds and produced from them heavy rain, spreading it on various lands. He drenched the earth after its dryness and grew vegetation from it after its barrenness.

Sermon 185

The Oneness of Allah. Principles of Knowledge

He who assigns to Him (different) conditions does not believe in His Oneness, nor does he who likens Him in order to grasp His reality. He who illustrates Him does not signify Him. He who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him. Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect (of something else). He works but not with the help of

instruments. He fixes measures but not with the activity of thinking. He is rich but not by acquisition.

Times do not keep company with Him. His Being precedes times. His Existence precedes non-existence, and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the senses, it is known that He has no "senses". By the contraries in various matters, it is known that He has no contrary, and by the similarity between things, it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture and heat that of cold. He produces affection among opponents.

He fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things and separates things which are joined together. He is not confined to limits, nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of their own kind and organs can point out things similar to themselves. The word mundhu (i.e. since) disproves their eternity[185], the word qad (that denotes nearness of time of occurrence), disproves their being from ever and the word lawla (if it were not) keep them remote from perfection.

Through them, the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence, and through them He is guarded from the vision of the eyes.

Stillness and motion do not apply to Him. How can a thing occur in Him which He has Himself made to occur, and how can a thing revert to Him which He first created, and how can a thing appear in Him which He first brought to appearance? If it had not been so, His Self will have become subject to diversity, His Being will have become divisible (into parts) and His reality will have been prevented from being deemed

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[185]The meaning here is: The words "*mundhu, qad* and *lawla*" have been made to be the antitheses of the attributes of "ever, eternal and perfect". Therefore, their application to anything will prove that they have come into existence from non-existence and are imperfect. For example, "mundhu" is used to denote time as is "qad wujida mundhu kadha" (this thing is found since such-and-such time). Here, a time limit has been stated. Anything for which a limit of time can be described cannot exist from ever or remain forever. The word "qad" shows (indicates the present perfect tense) the immediate past. This sense also can apply to a thing which is limited in time. The word *lawla* is used to denote the negation of something in another thing, such as "ma ahsanahu wa akmalahu lawla annahu kasha"; that is, "How beautiful and perfect it will be if it were such-and-such". Therefore, the thing for which this word is used will be in need of others to compare how handsome and perfect what it describes is, and this word will remain deficient by itself.

Eternal. If there was a front to Him there will have been a rear also for Him. He will need completing only if shortage befell Him. In such case, signs of the created will appear in Him and He will become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of signs leading to Him. Through the might of His abstention (from affectedness) He is far above being affected by things which effect others.

He is that which does not change or vanish. The process of setting does not behoove Him. He has not begotten anyone lest He should be regarded as having been born. He has not been begotten; otherwise, He will be contained within limits. He is too Sublime to have sons. He is too purified to contact women. Imagination cannot reach Him so as to assign Him quantity. Understanding cannot think of Him so as to give Him shape. Senses do not perceive Him so as to feel Him. Hands cannot touch Him so as to rub against Him. He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one state to another. Nights and days do not turn Him old. Light and darkness do not alter Him.

It cannot be said that He has a limit or extremity, an end or termination, nor do things control Him so as to raise or lower Him, nor does anything carry Him so as to bend Him or keep Him erect. He is not inside things nor outside them. He conveys news, but not with tongue or voice. He listens, but not with the holes of the ears or the organs of hearing. He says but does not utter words. He remembers, but does not memorize. He determines, but not by exercising His mind. He loves and approves without any sentimentality (of heart). He hates and feels angry without any painstaking. When He intends to create someone/something He says, “Be!”, and there he/she/it is! But He does not do so through voice that strikes (the ears). His speech is an indication of His creation. His like never existed “before” nor “after”.

It cannot be said that He came into being after He had not been in existence because, in that case, the attributes of the created things will be assigned to Him and there will remain no difference between them and Him, and He will have no distinction over them. Thus, the Creator and the created will become equal and the initiator and the initiated will be on the same level. He created (the whole of) creation without any example made by someone else, and He did not secure the assistance of anyone out of His creation for creating it.

He created the earth and suspended it without being ‘busy”, retained it without support, made it stand without legs, raised it without pillars, protected it against bending and curving and defended it against

crumbling and splitting (into parts). He fixed mountains on it like stumps, solidified its rocks, caused its streams to flow and opened its valleys wide. Whatever He made did not suffer from any flow, and whatever He strengthened did not show any weakness.

He manifests Himself over the earth with His authority and greatness. He is aware of its inside through His knowledge and understanding. He has power over everything on earth by virtue of His sublimity and dignity. Nothing from the earth that He may ask for defies Him, nor does it oppose Him so as to overpower Him. No swift-footed creature can run away from Him so as to ahead of Him. He is not needy towards any possessing person so that the latter should feed Him. All things bow down to Him and are humble before His greatness. They cannot flee away from His authority to someone else in order to escape His benefit or His harm. There is no parallel for Him that may match Him and no one like Him so as to equal Him.

He will destroy the earth after its existence, till all that exists on it will become non-existent. But the extinction of the world after its creation is no more wonderous than its first formation and invention. How could it be? Even if all the animals of the earth, whether birds or beasts, stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men..., all jointly try to create (even) a mosquito, they are not able to bring it into being and do not understand what is the way to its creation. Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short, fail and return disappointed and tired, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also realizing that they are too weak (even) to destroy it.

Surely, after the extinction of the world, Allāh, the most Glorified One, will remain alone with nothing else besides Him. He will be, after its extinction, as He was before its production: without time or place or moment or period. At this moment, period and time will not exist and years and hours will disappear. There will be nothing except Allah, the One, the Almighty. To Him is the return of all matters. Its initial creation was not in its power, and the prevention of its extinction was (also) not in its power. Had it had the power to prevent it, it would have existed forever. When He made anything of the world, the making of it did not cause Him any difficulty and the creation of anything which He created and formed did not cause Him any fatigue. He did not create it to heighten His authority nor for fear of loss or harm, nor to seek its help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any avenging opponent with its help, nor for the extension of His domain by its help, nor for boasting

(over the size of His possession) against a partner, nor because He felt lonely and desired to seek its company.

After its creation, He will destroy it, but not because any worry has overcome Him in its upkeep and administration, nor for any pleasure that will accrue to Him, nor for the cumbrousness of anything over Him. The length of its life does not weary Him so as to induce Him to its quick destruction. Allah, the Glorified One, has maintained it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command and perfected it with His power. Then after its destruction, He will resurrect it, but not for any need of His own towards it, nor to seek the assistance of any of its things against it, nor to change over from the condition of loneliness to that of company, nor from the condition of ignorance and blindness to that of knowledge and search, nor from paucity and need towards needlessness and plenty, nor from disgrace and lowliness towards honor and prestige.

Sermon 186

Regarding the Vicissitudes of Time (The Mischief That Is to Occur and the Absence of Lawful Ways of Livelihood)

May my father and mother be sacrificed for those few whose names are well-known in the heavens while not known on the earth! Beware, you should expect what is to befall you, such as adversity in your affairs, severance of relations and the rising up of inferior people. This will happen when the blow of a sword will be easier for a believer than to secure one dirham lawfully. This will happen[186] when the reward of the beggar is more than that of the giver. This will be when you are intoxicated, not by drinking, but with wealth and plenty, swearing without compulsion and speaking lies without compulsion. This will be when troubles hurt you as the saddle hurts the hump of the camel. How long will these tribulations be and how distant the hope (for deliverance from them)?

[186]During such a period, the reward of the beggar who takes (charity) will be higher than that of the giver because of the ways of earning livelihood. Such means earned by the rich will be unlawful; so, whatever one donates of it, its purpose will be to show off, for the sake of hypocrisy and fame for which he will not be entitled to any reward, while the poor who takes it by force of the necessity of their poverty and helplessness and spend it in the right manner will deserve more reward and recompense.

O people! Throw away the reins of the horses that carry on their backs the weight of your hands have committed (i.e. your sins). Do not cut away from your chief (Imam); otherwise, you will blame yourselves for your own doings. Do not jump in the fire which is in flames in front of you; keep away from its courses and leave the middle way for it. Because, by my life, a believer will die in its flames while others will remain safe.

I am among you like a lamp in the darkness. Whoever enters by it will be lit. So listen, O men! Preserve it and remain attentive with the ears of your hearts so that you may understand.

The commentator, Ibn Abul-Hadid, has written another meaning of it: If the beggar does not take the wealth from the rich, so it remains with the latter, they will spend it on unlawful matters and enjoyments. Since the beggar's taking the wealth from the rich prevents the latter from using wealth for unlawful things, hence there will be prevention from evil, the beggar deserves more rewards and compensations (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 13, p. 97).

Sermon 187

Allah's Favors

I admonish you, O people, to fear Allah and to praise Him abundantly for His favors unto you, for His reward for you, and [even] for His obligations on you. See how He chose you for favors and dealt with you with mercy. You sinned openly; He kept your sins covered. You behaved in a way to incur His punishment, but He gave you more respite.

Condition of Persons Facing Death

I also admonish you to remember death and to lessen your heedlessness towards it. Why should you be heedless of the One Who is not heedless of you? Why expect from him (i.e. the angel of death) to give you a respite? The dead whom you have been watching suffice as preachers. They were carried to their graves, not riding but transported, and were placed in their graves, but not of their own accord. It seems as if they never lived in this world and as if the next world had always been their abode. They have made lonely the place where they were living and are now living where they used to feel lonely. They remained busy about what they had to leave behind them and did not care about where they were going to. Now, they cannot remove themselves from evil, nor add to

their virtues. They were attached to the world and it deceived them. They trusted it and it overturned the tables to them.

Transience of this World

May Allah have pity on you! You should, therefore, hasten towards (the preparation of) houses which you have been commanded to populate, towards which you have been called upon, and to which you have been invited. Seek the completion of Allah's favors on you by exercising endurance in His obedience and abstention from His disobedience because tomorrow is close to today. How fast are the hours of the day?! How fast are the days in the month?! How fast are the months in the years and how fast the years in one's lifetime?!

Sermon 188

Steadfastness versus a Transient Belief

One belief is (conviction) which is firm and steadfast in the hearts. Another remains temporarily in one's heart up to a certain period of time. If you were to acquit (yourselves) before anyone, you should wait till death approaches, for that is the time limit for being acquitted.

Migration stands as its original status. Allah has no need for one who secretly accepts belief or one who openly does so. Migration (to the other world) will not apply to any one unless he recognizes the proof (of Allah) on the earth. Whoever recognizes him and acknowledges him will be a muhajir (immigrant). Istid'af (i.e. freedom from the obligation of migration) does not apply to him whom the proof (of Allah) reaches and he hears it and his heart preserves it.[187]

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[187]This is the interpretation of the words *muhajir* and *mustad'af* as mentioned in the Holy Quran: *Verily those whom the angels take away (at the time of death), being unjust to their (own) selves, they (the angels) shall ask (the sinning souls): "In what state were you? They shall reply: Weakened (*mustad'af *- oppressed) were we in the land; they (angels) will say: Was not the land of Allah vast (enough) for you to traverse therein? So these (are those) whose refuge shall be Hell, and what a bad resort it is! Except the (really) weakened ones from among the men, women and children who have not in their power the means (to escape from the unbelievers) nor do they find the (right) way. Allah will perhaps pardon them, and Allah is the Clement, the Oft-forgiving One (4: 97-99).* The meaning of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) here is that *hijra* (migration) was not only obligatory during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (ص),

The challenge of "Ask me before you miss me" and a prediction about the Umayyads

Certainly, our case is difficult and complicated. No one can bear it except a believer whose heart Allah has tried with belief. Our traditions will not be preserved except by trustworthy hearts and (men of) firm understanding. O people! Ask me before you miss me because certainly I am acquainted with the passages of the sky more than the passages of the earth, and before that mischief springs upon its feet which will trample even the nose string and destroy the wits of the people.

Some people have explained this saying of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to mean that by the passages of the earth he means matters of the world and by passages of the sky matters of religious law and that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) intends to say that he knows the matters of religious law and commandments more than the worldly matters. Thus, Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani writes (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, pp. 200-201):.

Allama al-Wabari is quoted as having said that the gist of the intention of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is this: The scope of his religious knowledge is greater than his knowledge about matters relevant to the world.

But taking the context into account, this explanation cannot be held as correct because this sentence (being explained) has been used as the cause of the sentence "Ask me before you miss me" and after it is the prediction of a rebellion. In-between these two, the occurrence of the sentence "I know religious matters more than worldly matters" makes the whole utterance quite disregarded because Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's challenge to ask whatever one likes is not confined to matters of the religious law only, so this sentence could be held as its cause. After that, the prediction of the rebellion has nothing to do with matters of the

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but it is a permanent obligation. This migration is nowadays obligatory for attaining the proof of Allah and the true religion. Therefore, if one has attained the proof of Allah and believed in it, even if he is in midst of the unbelievers of his locality, he is not duty-bound to migrate.

The *mustad'af* (weakened) is one who is living among the unbelievers and is far from being informed of the proofs of Allah and, at the same time, he is unable to migrate in order to attain knowledge of the Signs of Allah.

religious law so that it could be put forth as a proof of more knowledge of religious matters. To ignore the clear import of the words and to interpret them in a way which does not suit the occasion, does not exhibit a correct spirit when from the context also the same meaning accrues, one which the words openly convey. Thus, it is to give a warning about the Umayyad's mischief that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered the statement "Ask me whatever you like because I know the paths and courses of the Divine destiny more than the passages of the earth. So, even if you ask me about matters which are recorded in the Preserved Tablet and which concern the Divine destiny, I can tell you. A serious mischief is to rise against me in those matters in which you should have doubt because my eyes are more acquainted with those ethereal lines which concern the occurrence of events and mischiefs than with what I know about life as it appears on earth. The occurrence of this mischief is as certain as an object seen with the eyes. You should, therefore, ask me about its details and about how to keep safe from it, so that you may be able to manage your defense when the time comes." This meaning is supported by the successive sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) which he uttered with regard to the unknown and to which future events did, indeed, testify. Thus, Ibn Abul Hadid comments on this claim of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as follows:

"Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's claim is also supported by his statements about future events which he uttered not once or a hundred times but continuously and successively. From them, there remains no doubt that whatever he spoke was on the basis of knowledge and certainty, not by chance" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 13, p. 106).

With regard to this saying of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), it has already been demonstrated and explained (in Sermon 92, Footnote 2) that no one else dared advance such a claim, and those who made such a claim had to face only disgrace and humility. About the prophecies made by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), see Ibn Abul-Hadid's Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 7, pp. 47-51; judge Nurullah al-Mar'ashi's Ihqaq al-Haqq (New ed.), Vol. 8, pp. 87-182.

Sermon 189

Importance of Fearing Allah, Desolateness of the Grave, Death of Those Who Love Ahl Al-bayt (ع) Similar to That of Martyrs

I praise Him out of gratitude for His rewards and I seek His assistance in fulfilling my obligations to Him. He has a strong host. His dignity is grand. I testify that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and Prophet. He called (people) to His obedience and overpowered His enemies when fighting for His religion. People's joining together to falsify Him and their attempt to extinguish His light were of no avail.

You should, therefore, be steadfast in your fear of Allah because it has a rope the knot of which is strong, its pinnacle is lofty and invulnerable. Hasten towards death in its pangs (by doing good deeds) and be prepared for it before its approach because the ultimate end is the Day of Judgement. This is enough admonishment for one who understands and suffices for a lesson for one who does not know. What idea do you have, before reaching that end, about how narrow the grave is, about the hardship of loneliness, fear of the passage towards the next world, the pangs of fear, the shifting of ribs here and there (due to narrowing of the grave), the deafness of ears, the darkness of the grave, the fear of the promised punishment, the closing of the receptacle of the grave and the laying of the tomb stones?

So fear Allah, fear Allah, O servants of Allah, because the world is behaving with you in the usual way, and you and the Day of Judgement are in the same rope (close to each other), as though it has come with its signs, has approached with its pleas and has made you stand in its way. It is as though it has come forward with all its quaking and has settled down with its chest on the ground while the world has parted from its people and turned them out of its lap. It was like a day that has passed or a month that has gone by. Its new things have become old and the fat ones have become thin.

They are in a narrow place, in very complicated affairs and in a fire whose pain is intense, the cries are loud, the flames rise [as high as mountains], the sound causes a trembling, the burning is severe and abatement from all of this is quite remote. Its fuel is burning, its threats are fearful, its hollows are hidden, its sides are dark, its vessels are aflame and everything about it is abominable.

"Those who feared (the wrath of) their Master shall be conveyed in groups to the Garden" (Holy Quran, 39: 73). They are safe from chastisement, away from punishment and are kept aloof from the fire. Their abode will be peaceful, and they will be pleased with their lodging and place of stay. These are the people whose deeds in this world were pure, their eyes were tearful, their nights in this world were like days because of fearing [Allāh], seeking [His] forgiveness, and their days were like nights because of feeling of loneliness and separation. Therefore, Allah made Paradise the place of their (eventual) return, a reward in recompense. They were most eligible and suitable for it (Holy Quran, 48: 26) in the eternal domain and everlasting bliss.

Therefore, O servants of Allah, pay regard to all that by being mindful of which one will succeed and by ignoring which one will incur loss. Hasten towards your death by means of your (good) deeds because you are bound by what you have done in the past, and you have to your credit only what (good deeds) you have sent before. (Behave in such a way) as though the feared event (death) has come upon you, so you cannot return (to do good deeds) nor can you be cleared of evil deeds. May Allah prompt us and you to be obedient to Him and to His Prophet (ص), and may He forgive us and your own selves by His great mercy.

Remain patient during trials and tribulations. Do not move your hands and swords after the liking of your tongues, and do not make haste in matters in which Allah has not asked for haste: anyone of you who dies in his bed while having knowledge of the rights of Allah and the rights of His Prophet (ص) and members of the Prophet's house will die as a martyr. His reward is incumbent on Allah. He is also eligible to the recompense of what good deeds he has intended to do, since his intention takes the place of drawing his sword. Certainly, for everything there is a time and a limit.

Sermon 190

Praising Allah

Praise be to Allah Whose praise is wide-spread, Whose army is over-powering and Whose dignity is grand. I praise Him for His successive favors and great boons. His forbearance is high, so He forgives, and He is just in whatever He decides. He knows what is going on and what has already passed. He crafted all creation with His knowledge and produced it with His intelligence without being limited to

anything, without learning [from anyone or anything], without following the example of any intelligent producer, without committing any mistake and without the availability of any group (for help). I testify that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and His Messenger whom He deputed (at a time) when people were collecting in the abyss and moving in bewilderment. The reins of destruction were dragging them and the locks of malice lay fixed on their hearts.

Advice about fear of Allah and an account of this world and its people

I admonish you, O servants of Allah,to fear Allah because it is a right of Allah over you; it creates your right over Allah, and that you should seek Allah's help in it and help in (meeting) Allah. Certainly, for today, fear of Allah is a protection and a shield for tomorrow (the Day of Judgement); it is the road to Paradise. Its way is clear and he who treads it is the winner. Whoever holds it must safeguards it. It has presented itself to the people who have already passed and to those coming into being because they will need it tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement). It is then that Allah will revive His creation again, take back what He has given and take account of what He has bestowed. How few will be those who accept it and practice it as it ought to be practiced! They will be very few in number; they are the people who fit the description provided by Allah, the Glorified One, when He says: "And very few of My creatures are grateful!" (Holy Quran, 34: 13).

So make haste towards it; intensify your efforts for it. Make it a substitute for all your past (shortcomings) as a successor. Make it your supporter against every opponent. Turn your sleep into wakefulness by its help and pass your days in its company. Make it the tool of your hearts, wash your sins with it, treat your ailments with it and hasten towards your death with it... Learn a lesson from him who neglects it, so that others who follow it should not learn a lesson from you (i.e. from your neglecting it). Beware, therefore; you should take care of it and should take care of yourselves through it.

Keep away from this world and proceed towards the next with infatuation. Do not regard humbly one whom fear of Allah has given a high status, and do not accord a high status to him whom this world has given a high status. Do not keep your eyes on the shining clouds of the world. Do not listen to him who speaks of it, do not respond to him who calls you towards it, do not seek light from its glare and do not die for its precious things because its glitter is deceitful, its words are false, its

wealth is a liability to be looted, and its precious things are to be taken away.

Beware! This world attracts then turns away. It is stubborn, refusing to go ahead. It speaks lies, and it misappropriates. It disowns and is ungrateful. It is malicious and abandons (its lovers). It attracts but causes trouble. Its condition is changing, its step shaking, its honor disgraceful, its seriousness a jest and its height is lowliness. It is a place of plunder and pillage, ruin and destruction. Its people are ready with their feet to drive, to overtake, then to depart. Its routes are bewildering, its exits are baffling and its schemes end in disappointment. Consequently, strongholds betray them, houses throw them out and cunning fails them.

Some of them are like hocked camels, some like butchered meat, some like severed limbs, some like spilt blood, some bite their hands (in pain), some rub their palms (in remorse), some hold their cheeks on their hands (in anxiety), some curse their own views and some retreat from their determination. But the time for action has gone by, and the hour of calamity has approached. This is so while (there is no longer) time to escape (Holy Quran, 38: 3). Alas! Alas! What is been lost is lost! What is gone is gone! The world has passed in its usual manner.

"So the heavens and the earth did not mourn them, nor were they given a respite" (Holy Quran, 44: 29).

Sermon 191

Known as "al-Khutbah al-Qasi'a" (the Sermon of Disparagement)

It comprises a disparagement of Satan [Iblis] for his vanity, his refusal to prostrate before Adam (ع), and his being the first to display bigotry and behave with vanity. It contains a warning to people treading in Satan's path.

Praise be to Allah Who wears the apparel of Honor and Dignity and has chosen them for Himself rather than for His creation. He has made them inaccessible and unlawful for others. He has selected them for His own great self and has hurled a curse on him who contends with Him concerning them.

Trial by Allah, Vanity of Iblis

Then He put His angels on trial concerning these attributes in order to distinguish those who were modest from those who were vain. Therefore, Allah, Who is aware of whatever is hidden in the hearts and whatever lies behind the unseen, said the following: "Verily, I am about to create man from clay. And when I have completed and breathe d into him of My spirit, prostrate to him. And the angels, all of them, did prostrate [to Adam] save Iblis" (Holy Quran, 38: 71 - 74).

His vanity stood in his [Iblis's] way! Consequently, he felt proud about Adam by virtue of his creation, boasted over him on account of his origin. Thus, this enemy of Allah is the leader of those who boast and the fore-runner of vanity. It is he who laid the foundation of factionalism, quarreled with Allah about the robe of greatness, put on the outfit of haughtiness and took off the covering of humility. Do you not see how Allah made him low on account of his vanity and humiliated him for his bid to be high? He discarded him in this world and provided for him burning fire in the next world.

Had Allah wanted to create Adam from a light whose glare dazzles the eyes, whose handsomeness would have amazed the wits and whose smell would have caught the breath, He would have done so. And if He had done so, people would have bowed down to him in humility, and the trial of the angels through him would have become easier. But Allah, the Glorified One, tries His creatures by means of those things the real nature of which they do not know. He does so in order to distinguish (what is good from what is bad) for them through the trial, to remove vanity from them, and to keep them away from pride and self-admiration.

You should learn a lesson from what Allah did with Satan. He nullified his great deeds and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or by that of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified One, will not let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned an angel from it. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him license for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.

Warning Against Satan

Therefore, you should fear lest Satan should infect you with his disease or lead you astray through his call or march on you with his horsemen and footmen because, by my life, he has put the arrow in the bow for you, has stretched the bow strongly and has aimed at you from a nearby distance and: "He (Satan) said the following: Lord! Because You let me stray, certainly will I adorn unto them the path of error, and certainly will I cause them all to go astray" (Holy Quran, 15: 39).

Although he (Satan) had said so only by guessing about the unknown future and by wrong conjecturing, yet the sons of vanity, the brothers of haughtiness and the horsemen of pride and intolerance proved him to be true, so much so that when disobedient persons from among you bowed before him and his greed about you gained strength, and what was a hidden secret turned into a clear fact..., he spread his full control over you and marched with his forces towards you.

Then they pushed you into the hollows of disgrace, threw you into the whirlpools of slaughter and trampled on you, wounding you by striking your eyes with spears, cutting your throats, tearing your nostrils, breaking your limbs and taking you in ropes towards the fire that is already prepared. In this way, he became more harmful to your religion and a greater kindler of flames (of mischief) about your worldly matters than the enemies against whom you showed open opposition and against whom you marched with your forces.

You should, therefore, spend all your force against him and all your efforts confronting him because, by Allah, he boasted over your (i.e. Adam's) origin, questioned your status and spoke lightly of your lineage. He advanced on you with his army and brought his footmen towards your path. They are chasing you from every place and they are hitting you at every finger joint. You are not able to defend by any means, nor can you repulse them by any effort. You are in the thick of disgrace, the ring of straitness, the field of death and the way of distress.

You should, therefore, put out the fires of haughtiness and the flames of intolerance that are hidden in your hearts. This vanity can exist in a Muslim only through the insinuations of Satan, his haughtiness, mischief and whisperings. Make up your mind to be humble, to trample on egotism and self-pride and to cast off vanity. Adopt humility as the weapon with which you fight your enemies, Satan and his forces. He certainly has, from every people, fighters, helpers, footmen and horsemen.

Do not be like him who feigned superiority over the son of his own mother without any distinction given to him by Allah except the feeling of envy which his feeling of greatness created in him and the fire of anger that vanity kindled in his heart. Satan blew into his nose his own vanity following which Allah gave him remorse and made him responsible for the sins of all killers up to the Day of Judgement.

Cautioning Against Vanity and Ignorant Boasting

Beware! You strove hard in rebellioning and created mischief on earth in open opposition to Allah, challenging the believers over fighting. (You should fear) Allah in feeling proud; beware of your vanity and ignorant boasting over because this is the root of enmity and the design of Satan whereby he has been deceiving past people and bygone ages, with the result that they fell into the gloom of his ignorance and the hollows of his misguidance, submitting to his driving and accepting his leadership. In this matter, the hearts of all the people were similar. Centuries passed by, one after the other, in the same way, and there was vanity with which chests were tightened.

Cautioning Against Obeying Haughty Leaders and Elders

Beware! Beware of obeying your leaders and elders who feel proud of their achievements and boast about their lineage. They hurled the (liability for) things on Allah and quarreled with Him regarding what He did with them, contesting His decree and disputing His favors. Certainly, they are themain foundation of obstinacy, the chief pillars of mischief and the swords of pre-Islamic boasting over fore-fathers. Therefore, fear Allah, do not become antagonistic to His favors on you, nor jealous of His bounty over you and do not obey the claimants (of Islam) whose dirty water you drink along with your clean one, whose ailments you mix with your healthiness and whose wrongs you allow to enter into your rightful matters.

They are the foundation of vice and the linings of disobedience. Satan has made them carriers of misguidance and the soldiers with whom he assaults men. They are interpreters through whom he speaks in order to steal away your wits, enter into your eyes and blow into your ears. In this way, he makes you the victim of his arrows, the treading ground of his footsteps and source of strength for his hands. Learn from how he brought wrath, violence, chastisement and punishment on those who were vain from among the past people. Take admonition from their lying on their

cheeks and falling on their sides and seek Allah's protection from the dangers of vanity, as you seek His protection from calamities.

Humbleness of the Holy Prophet (ص)

Certainly, if Allah were to allow anyone to indulge in pride, He will have allowed it to His selected prophets and vicegerents. But Allah, the Sublime, disliked vanity for them and likes to see them humble. Therefore, they laid their cheeks on the ground, smeared their faces with the dust, bent down for the believers and remained humble. Allah tried them with hunger, afflicted them with difficulty, tested them with fear and upset them with troubles. Therefore, do not regard wealth and progeny as the criterion for Allah's pleasure and displeasure, as you are not aware of the chances of mischief and trials during richness and power as Allah, the Glorified One, the Sublime, has said the following: "What?! Do they think that what We aid them with wealth and children that We are hastening to them the good things? Nay! They (only) do not perceive it" (Holy Quran, 23: 55-56).

Certainly, Allāh, the most Glorified One, tries His beings who are vain through His beloved persons who are humble in their eyes.

When Musa son of Imran went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun (Aaron) wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding canes in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his prestige only if he submitted. But he said the following: "Do you not wonder at these two men guaranteeing me the continuity of my prestige and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness?! Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangles on their wrists?!" He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions and considering wool and its cloth as nothing.

Allah, the Glorified One, deputed His prophets to mankind. If He had wished to open for them treasures and mines of gold and (surround them with) planted gardens and collect around them the birds of the skies and the beasts of the earth, He could have done so. Had He had done so, there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the affairs of the next life). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense due after trial, and the believers could not deserve the reward for good deeds, and all these words will not have retained their meanings. But Allah, the Glorified One, makes His Prophets firm in their determination and gives them weakness of appearance as seen by the

eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care-freeness and with want that pains the eyes and the ears.

Had the prophets possessed authority that could not be assaulted, or honor that could not be touched with harm or domain towards which thenecks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it will have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vain. They will have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them and their intention will have been the same, although their actions will have been different. Therefore, Allah, the Glorified One, decided that people should follow His prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His Greatness, act upon His commands and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else. As the trial and tribulation will be stiffer, the reward and recompense, too, should be greater.

The Holy Ka`ba

Do you not see that Allah, the Glorified One, has tried all the people who came with Adam, up to the last ones in this world, with stones which yield neither benefit nor harm, which neither see nor hear? [Yet] He made those stones into His sacred House which He made as a place of worship for people. He placed it in the most rugged stony part of the earth, on a highland with the least soil, among the most narrow valleys between rough mountains, soft sandy plains, springs of scanty water and scattered inhabitants, where neither camels nor horses nor cows nor sheep can prosper.

Then He commanded Adam and his sons to turn towards it. In this way, it became the center of their journey in seeking pasture, the rendezvous for the meeting of their beasts of burden, so that human spirits would hasten towards it from distant waterless deserts, deep and low lying valleys and scattered islands in the seas. They shake their shoulders in humbleness, recite the slogan of having reached His audience, march with swift feet and have disheveled hair and dusted faces. They throw their pieces of cloth on their backs. They have marred the beauty of their faces by leaving the hair uncut as a matter of great test, severe tribulation, open trial and extreme refining. Allah has made it a means to His mercy and an approach to His Paradise.

If Allah, the Glorified One, had placed His sacred House and His great signs among plantations, streams, soft and level plains, plenty of trees, an abundance of fruits, a thick population, close habitats, golden

wheat, lush gardens, green land, watered plains, thriving orchards and crowded streets..., the amount of recompense will have decreased because of the lightness of the trial. If the foundation on which the House is built and the stones with which it has been raised had been of green emerald and red rubies, and had therebeen brightness and glory, then this will have lessened the action of doubts in the breasts, will have dismissed the effect of Satan's activity from the hearts and will have stopped the surging of misgivings in people. But Allah tries His servants with means of different troubles. He wants them to render worship through hardship and involves them in distress, all in order to extract vanity from their hearts, to settle down humbleness in their spirits and to make all this an open door for His favors and an easy means for His forgiveness (of their sins).

Cautioning Against Rebellion and Oppressiveness

(Fear) Allah from the immediate consequence of rebellion and the eventual consequence of weighty oppressiveness (to accrue in the next world) and from the evil result of vanity. Vanity is the great trap of Satan and his big deceit which enters the hearts of the people as fatal poison does. It is never wasted, nor does ti miss anyone, neither the learned on account of their knowledge, nor the destitute in their rags. This is the thing against which Allah has protected His believing servants by means of prayers and alms-giving and suffering the hardship of fasting in the days in which it has been made obligatory, in order to provide their limbs with peacefulness, to cast fear in their eyes, to humble their spirits, to give their hearts humility and to remove haughtiness from them. All this is achieved through the covering of their delicate cheeks with dust in humility, prostrating their limbs on the ground in humbleness and retracting their bellies so as to reach to their backs due to fasting by way of lowliness (before Allah), besides giving all sorts of products of the earth to the needy and the destitute by way of alms.

Look what these deeds contain of curbing the appearance of pride and suppressing the traces of vanity. I cast my glance and noticed that no one in the world, except you, feel vanity for anything without a cause which may appeal to the ignorant, or a reason which may cling to theminds of the fools because you feel vanity for something for which no reason is discernable, nor any ground.

As for Satan, he felt proud about Adam because of his origin and taunted at him about his creation. He said, "I am created of [smokeless] fire whereas you are created of clay." Likewise, the rich among the prosperous communities have been feeling vanity because of their riches,

as (Allah) said the following: 'And they said, 'We are more (than you) in wealth and in children, and we shall not be chastised'" (Holy Quran, 34: 35).

Enthusiasm for Attractive Manners, Respectable Status and Taking Lessons from the Past

In case you cannot avoid vanity, your vanity should be for good qualities, praiseworthy deeds and admirable merits with which the dignified and noble chiefs of the Arab families distinguished themselves. Such merits include attractive manners, high thinking, respectable status and commendable feats. You, too, should show vanity in praiseworthy habits like protection of the neighbor, fulfillment of agreements, obedience of the virtuous, opposition to the haughty, extending generosity to others, abstention from dissension, keeping aloof from bloodshed, doing justice to people, suppressing anger and avoiding trouble on earth. You should also fear what calamities befell nations before you on account of their evil deeds and detestable conduct. Remember, during good or bad times, what happened to them and be cautious lest you should become like them.

After you have thought over the conditions of these people, attach yourself to everything with which their status became honorable, on account of which enemies kept away from them, thus safety spread over them, by reason of which riches bowed before them and, as a result, distinction connected itself to their rope. These things were: abstention from division, sticking to unity, calling each other to it and advising each other about it. You should avoid everything which broke those nations' backbone and weakened their power, such as malice in the heart, hatred in the chest, turning away (from each other's help) and abstaining from one another's assistance.

Think about the condition of people from among the believers who passed by before you. What distresses and trials they were in! Were they not the most over-burdened among all the people and in the most strained circumstances in the whole world? The Pharaohs took them as slaves. They inflicted on them the worst punishments and bitter sufferings. They continuously remained in this state of ruinous disgrace and severe subjugation. They found no method for escape and no way for protection. Allah, the Glorified One, noticed that they were enduring troubles in His love and bearing distresses out of fear of Him, He provided escape routes from the distress of trials. So, He changed their disgrace into honor and fear into safety. Consequently, they became

ruling kings and conspicuous leaders. Allah's favors over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached.

See how they were when their groups were united, their views were unanimous, their hearts were moderate, their hands used to help one another, their swords were intended for assisting one another, their visions were sharp, and their aims were uniform. Did they not become masters of the corners of earth and rulers over the necks of all the worlds? Thereafter, also see what happened to them towards the end when division overtook them, unity became fractured and differences arose between their words and hearts. They divided into various groups and were scattered fighting among themselves. Then Allah took away from them the apparel of His honor and deprived them of the prosperity produced by His favors. Only their stories have remained among you for the guidance of those who may learn lessons from them.

You should learn a lesson from the fate of the progeny of Isma'il, the children of Isaac and the children of Israel. How similar their affairs and how akin their examples are! With regard to the details of their division and disunity, think of the days when Kisras of Persia and the Caesars of Rome had become their masters. They turned them out of their pastures, the rivers of Iraq and the fertility of the world, towards thorny forests, the passages of (hot) winds and hardships in livelihood. In this way, they turned them into just camel herders. Their houses were the worst in the world and their places of stay were the most drought-stricken. There was not one single voice towards which they could turn for protection, nor any shade of affection on whose strength they could place their trust.

Their condition was full of distress. Their energies were scattered. They were mostly divided, disunited. They were in great anguish and in pathetic ignorance. They buried their daughters alive, worshipped idols, disregarded kinship and practiced robbery.

Now, look at the various favors of Allah upon them! He deputed to them a Prophet (ص) who got them to pledge their obedience to him and made them unite under his call. (Look) how (Allah's) bounty spread the wings of its favors over them and streams of its blessing flowed for them; the whole community became wrapped in blissful prosperity. Consequently, they were submerged under its bounty and enjoyed its lush life. Their affairs were settled under the protection of a powerful ruler. Circumstances offered them lofty honor, and all things became easy for them within one united and strong country. They became rulers over the

world and kings in the (various) parts of earth. They became masters of those who were formerly their masters and began issuing commands over those who used to command them. They were so strong that neither their spears needed testing nor did their weapons have any flaw.

Condemning His People

Beware! You have shaken your hands loose from the rope of obedience and broken the Divine fort around you by (resorting to)

jahili (pre-Islamic) customs. Certainly, it is a great blessing of Allah, the Glorified One, that He has promoted among them unity through the cord of affection in whose shade they walk and are sheltered. This is a blessing the value of which none in the whole world realizes because it is more valuable than any price and more precious than any material wealth.

You should know that you have again reverted to the status of bedouin Arabs after migration (to Islam) and have become different parties after having been once united. You do not possess anything of Islam except its name and know nothing of belief except its outer cover. You say, "The Fire, yes, but no shameful status," as if you will throw down Islam on its face in order to defame its honor and break its pledge (of brotherhood) which Allah gave you as a sacred trust on His earth and (a source of) peace among the people. Rest assured that if you incline towards anything other than Islam, the unbelievers will fight you. Then there will be neither Gabriel nor Michael, neither Muhajirun nor Ansar to help you, only the clashing of swords, till Allah settles the matter for you.

Certainly, there are examples before you of Allah's wrath, punishment, days of tribulations and serious events. Therefore, do not disregard His promises, ignoring His punishment, underestimating His wrath and not expecting His violence. Allah, the Glorified One, did not curse the past generations except because they had forsaken enjoining others to do good deeds and to refrain from doing bad deeds. In fact, Allah cursed the foolish ones for committing sins and the wise for giving up on curbing others from committing evil deeds. Beware! You have broken the shackles of Islam, transgressed its limits and destroyed its commands.

Beware! Surely Allah has commanded me to fight those who rebellion or break their pledge or create trouble in the land. As regarding pledge-breakers, I have fought them. As regarding those who shrunk from the truth, I have waged a holy war against them. And as regarding those who have abandoned the creed, I have put them in (serious) disgrace. As for Satan of the Pit, he, too, has been dealt with by me through the loud cry with which the scream of his heart and shaking of his chest was also heard. Only a small portion of the rebels has remained. If Allah allows me one more chance over them I will annihilate them except a few remnants that may remain scattered in the suburb of the cities.

Even in my boyhood, I had lowered the chest of (famous men) of Arabia and broken the horn points (i.e. defeated the chiefs) of the tribes of Rabi`ah and Mudar. Certainly, you know my status of close kinship and special relationship with the Prophet of Allah (ص). When I was only a child, he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and put me beside him in his bed, bringing his body close to mine and letting me smell his fragrance. He used to chew something then feed me with it. He found no lie in my speech, nor weakness in any deeds.

From the time of my weaning, Allah had put a mighty angel with the Prophet (ص) to take him along the path of high character and good behavior through the day and the night, while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day, he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits, commanding me to follow it. Every year he used to go in seclusion to the hill of Hira', where I saw him but no one else saw him. In those days, Islam was not recognized in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah (ص) and Khadija, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the glory of the Divine revelation and message, and I breathed the scent of Prophethood.

When the revelation descended on the Prophet of Allah (ص), I heard the moan of Satan. I said, "O Prophet of Allah! What is this moaning?" He replied, "This is Satan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O Ali! You see all that I see and hear all that I hear, except that you are not a prophet; you are a vicegerent and you are surely on (the path of) virtue."

I was with him when a party of the tribesmen of Quraish came to him and said, “O Muhammad! You have made a big claim which none of your forefathers or those of your family has made. We ask you one thing; if you give us an answer to it and show it to us, we will believe that you are a prophet and a messenger, but if you cannot do it, we will know that you are a sorcerer and a liar.” The Messenger of Allah said the following: “What do you ask for?” They said, “Ask this tree to move towards us, even with its roots and stop before you.” The Prophet (ص) said, “Verily, Allah has power over everything. If Allah does it for you, will you then believe and testify to the truth?” They said, “Yes.” Then he said, “I shall show you whatever you want, but I know that you will not bend towards virtue, and there are among you those who will be thrown into the pit and those who will form parties (against me).” Then the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following: “O tree! If you do believe in Allah and in the Day of Judgement and know that I am the Prophet of Allah, come up with your roots and stand before me with the permission of Allah.” By the One Who deputed the Prophet (ص) with the truth, the tree did remove itself with its roots and came with a great humming sound and a flapping like the flapping of the wings of birds, till it stopped before the Messenger of Allah while some of its twigs came down onto my shoulders and I was on the right side of the Holy Prophet (ص).

When the people saw this, they said by way of pride and vanity, ‘Now you order half of it to come to you and the other half of it to remain (in its place).” The Holy Prophet (ص) ordered the tree to do the same. Half of the tree advanced towards him in an amazing manner and with a grater humming. It was about to touch the Prophet of Allah (ص). Then they said in their disbelief and rebellion, “Ask this half to get back to its other half and be as it was.” The Prophet (ص) ordered it and it returned. Then I said, “O Prophet of Allah! I am the first to believe in you and to acknowledge that the tree did what it did just now with the command of Allah, the Sublime One, in testimony to your Prophethood and to strengthen your word.” Upon this all the people shouted, ‘Rather a sorcerer, a liar, you are! This is wonderful sorcery! He is very adept in it. Only a youth like this (pointing to me) can stand testimony to you in your affairs.”

Certainly, I belong to the group of people who care not for the reproach of anybody in matters concerning Allah. Their countenance is the countenance of the truthful and their speech is the speech of the virtuous. They are wakeful during the nights (in devotion to Allah) and

over beacons (of guidance) in the day. They hold fast to the rope of the Holy Quran, revive the traditions of Allah and of His Prophet (ص). They do not boast nor indulge in self-conceit, nor misappropriate, nor create mischief. Their hearts are in Paradise while their bodies are busy in (good) deeds.

The intention above is: "You should not create conditions because of which you may be deprived of Allah's favors, like the jealous who aims at harming one of whom he is jealous."

There is also the intention above that if belief is accepted by force, and if worship is offered under pressure by some power or authority, neither will it be belief in the true sense nor worship in the real spirit. This is so because belief is an inner testimony and a heartfelt conviction. The conviction produced by force and compulsion can only be verbal, not heartfelt. Similarly, worship is the name of open acknowledgment of one's status of servitude. Worship devoid of the feeling of servitude or the sense of devotion performed only out of fear cannot be real worship. Therefore, such belief and such worship will not present their correct connotation.

The reason for the Imam (ع) specifying the learned and the poor, as indicated above, is that the learned person has the light of learning to lead him. The destitution of the poor may be a hindrance. In spite of this, both the learned and the poor may fall prey to one's deceit.

How can the ignorant person save himself from Satan's clutches, and how can the rich person, who has all the means to get into wrong ways, defend himself against him?

Nay! Verily man is wont to rebel!
As he deems himself needless!

If a glance is cast at the rise and fall as well as the events of the past nations, this fact will shine like daylight: The rise and fall of communities is not the result of luck or change. To a great extent, it is affected by their actions. Whatever type those actions may be, their outcomes and consequences are in accord with them. Consequently, the stories and events of past peoples openly reflect the fact that the result of oppression and evil deeds has always been ruin and destruction, while the consequence of a virtuous action and peaceful living was always good fortune and success. Since time immemorial, people make no difference,

if the same conditions appear again and again, the same actions are repeated, the same results must accrue which had appeared in the earlier set of circumstances. The accrual of the results of good or bad actions is sure and certain like the properties and effects of everything. If this were not so, it would not be possible to kindle hope in the minds of the oppressed and the afflicted by presenting to them past events and their respective effects, nor could the oppressors and tyrants be warned of the ill effects of their own misdeeds on the ground that it was not necessary that the same will accrue now as had accrued before. But it is the universality of causes which makes past events the object of a lesson for posterity. Consequently, it was for this purpose that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) provoked thinking and consideration, stating the various events of Banu Isma'il, Banu Ishaq and Banu Isra'il and their being afflicted at the hands of the kings of Persia and Rome.

The progeny of Isma'il, the elder son of Ibrahim (Abraham), is called Banu Isma'il, while the progeny of his younger son, Isaac, is called Banu Ishaq which later continued to divide into various off-shoots and acquired different names. Their original abode was at Canaan, Palestine, where Ibrahim had settled after the migration from the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris. His son Isma'il had settled in Hijaz, where Ibrahim had left him and his mother Hajar (Hagar). Isma'il married Sayyidah daughter of Mudad, a woman from the tribe of Jurhum which also inhabited this area. His progeny sprang from her and spread elsewhere. The other son of Ibrahim, namely Ishaq, remained in Canaan. His son was Ya`qub (Jacob, or Israel) who married Liya the daughter of his maternal uncle brother and after her death married his uncle's other daughter. Both of them bore his progeny which is known as Banu Isra'il. One of his sons was Yusuf (Joseph) who reached the neighboring country, Egypt, through an accident and, after suffering slavery and imprisonment, eventually he won a high position in the then government of a just Egyptian king.

After this change, Yusuf sent for all his family and relatives to join him. Thus, Egypt became the new abode of Banu Isra'il. For some time, they lived there in peace and security, leading a respectable life. But by and by, the locals began to view them with disdain and hatred, making them the target of all sorts of tyrannies, so much so that they used to kill their children and let their women live as their bondmaids, as a result of which their determination and courage were trampled upon, their spirit of freedom was completely subdued. At last, conditions changed and the period of their troubles came to an end after four hundred years of the shackles of slavery. This happened when Allah sent Musa to deliver them

from the oppression of Pharaoh. Musa set off with them to leave Egypt. In order to destroy Pharaoh, Allah turned them towards the Nile. Thus, the mighty river was in front and behind them were the huge forces of Pharaoh. This terrified them a great deal, but Allah commanded Musa to strike the river with his cane, causing a dry pathway therein. Thus, when he advanced, there appeared in the river not only one but several courses to pass through. Musa crossed to the other side of the river along with Banu Isra'il. Pharaoh was closely following. When he saw them passing, he, too, advanced with his army. But when they reached the middle of the Nile, the water engulfed Pharaoh and his army in its waves, finishing them. About them, the Holy Quran says the following: "And (remember) when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaying your sons and letting your women live, and in that there was a great trial from your Master" (2: 49).

Having left the boundaries of Egypt, they entered their motherland, Palestine, established their own state and began to live in freedom. Allah changed their lowliness and disgrace into the greatness and sublimity of rule and power. In this regard, Allah says the following:

"And We made the people who were deemed weak inherit the eastern parts of the earth and the western parts of it which we had blessed the rein (with fertility), and the good word of your Lord was fulfilled in the children of Israel for what they did endure, and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had wrought and what shade they made" (Holy Quran, 7: 137).

On gaining power and regaining prosperity and security, Banu Isra'il forgot all the ignominy and disgrace of the period of slavery. Instead of being thankful to Allah for the favors which He granted them, they took to rebellion and rebellion. Consequently, they shamelessly indulged in vices and misconduct, partaking in mischief and evil deeds to the maximum. They made lawful things which are unlawful and vice versa by false excuses. They disobeyed the prophets who tried to preach and correct them under the command of Allah and even killed them. The natural consequence of their vicious activities was that they were caught in punishment for their deeds. Nebuchadnezzar, who was ruling Babylon (in nowadays' Iraq) in 600 B.C. rose to power against Syria and Palestine and killed seventy thousand of Banu Isra'il with his blood-thirsty swords. He devastated their towns, drove away the survivors with him like sheep and goats and threw them in the abyss of ignominy by turning them into slaves. Although after this ruination there seemed no way for them to regain status and power, nature gave them still another chance to recover.

When Nebuchadnezzar died and power came in the hands of Belshazzar, one of their own, the latter started all sorts of oppression on the people. Being disgusted with this, they sent word to the ruler of Persia that they were tired of enduring the oppression of their ruler and that he should rescue them from him and free them from the oppression of Belshazzar. Cyrus the Great, who was a just and upright ruler, rose up in response to this request and, with the cooperation of the local population, overturned the government, as a consequence of which the yoke of slavery on the necks of Banu Isra'il was also removed, and they were allowed to return to Palestine. Thus, after seventy years of subjugation, they again set foot in their homeland and took over the reins of government. If they had taken their lesson from the past events, they would not have committed the same evils as a consequence of which they had to suffer slavery. But the mental constitution of his community was such that whenever they achieved of prosperity and freedom from care, they lost themselves in the intoxication of riches and in the enjoyment of pleasure, mocked the laws of religion, derided the prophets and even killed them; all these vices did not mean anything to them. Thus, when their ruler, Herod, at the request of his sweetheart [Shalomy], beheaded Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) and presented his head to her, none of them raised any voice against this brutality or was affected by it in any manner. This was the state of their unruliness and fierce nature when Isa made his appearance. He stopped them from committing evil deeds and exhorted them to adopt good customs, but they opposed him, too, and gave him troubles of various sorts, so much so that they even tried to end his life. However, Allah foiled all their plots and made Isa safe against their mischief. When their disobedience reached this stage and their capacity to accept guidance was completely wiped out, fate decided to ruin them and make full arrangements for their annihilation and destruction. The ruler of Byzantine Rome, Vespasianus, sent his son, Titus, to attack Syria. He laid a siege around Jerusalem, demolished houses and broke down the walls of the synagogues as a result of which thousands of Banu Isra'il left their homes and became scattered abroad, while thousands died of hunger. Those who remained were put to death. Most of them settled in Hijaz. Because of their rejection of Prophet Muhammad (ص), their unity was so disturbed that they could never again converge on any one center of honor and could never regain a life of prestige and dignity in place of disgrace and ignominy.

In the same way, the ruler of then Persia made serious attacks on Arabia and subjugated the inhabitants of those areas. Thus, Shahpur son of Hormuz, at the age of sixteen, took with him four thousand combatants and attacked the Arabs who resided within the boundaries of Persia then

advanced towards Bahrain, Qatif and Hajar and ruined Banu Tamim, Banu Bakr ibn Wa'il and Banu Abdul-Qays, cutting through the shoulders of seventy thousand Arabs, earning the nickname "Dhul-Aktaf" (the man of the shoulders). He forced the Arabs to live in tents of woven animal hair, grow long hair on their heads, not wear white clothes and ride unsaddled horses. Then he settled twelve thousand people of Isfahan and other cities of Peria in the area between Iraq and Syria. In this way, he drove the inhabitants of those areas from fertile lands to waterless forests which had neither conveniences of life nor means of livelihood. For long, these people remained the victims of others' oppression due to their own disunity and division. At last, Allah deputed the Prophet (ص) and raised them out of disgrace to the highest pinnacle of progress and sublimity.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, `Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abdullah ibn Abbas narrated that the Holy Prophet (ص) commanded Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to fight those who were pledge-breakers (nakithin), deviators from truth (qasitin) and those who had reneged from the faith (mariqin). See the following references for this fact: Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 139; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1117; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 3, pp. 32-33; Al-Durr al-Manthur, Vol. 6, p. 18; Al-Khasa'is al-Kubra, Vol. 2, p. 138; Majma' al-Zawa'id, Vol. 5, p. 186; Vol. 6, p. 235; Vol. 7, p. 238; Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 6, pp. 72,82,88,155,215,319,391,392; Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 8, p. 340; Vol. 13, pp. 186-187; Tarikh, Ibn Asakir, Vol. 5, p. 41; Tarikh, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, pp. 304-306; Al-Riyad al-Nadira, Vol. 2, p. 240; Sharh al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyya, Vol. 3, pp. 316-317; Sharh al-Mawaddat al-Awham, Vol. 1, p. 386).

Ibn Abul-Hadid says, "It has been proven (by right ascription) from the Holy Prophet (ص) that he said the following to Ali (ع): "You will fight after me those who are pledge-breakers, deviators from the truth and those who have gone out of the faith."

The pledge-breakers were the people of Jamal because they broke their allegiance to him. The deviators from the truth were the people of Syria at Siffin. Those who reneged from the faith were the Kharijites at an-Nahrawan. Regarding these three groups, Allah says (about the first one): "Verily, those who swear their fealty to you do swear fealty to Allah; the hand of Allah is above their hands; so, whosoever violates his oath violates it only to the harm of his (own) self" (Holy Quran, 48: 10). About the second group Allah says the following: "As for the deviators,

they shall be the fuel of hell" (Holy Quran, 72: 15). Concerning the third group, Ibn Abul-Hadid has referred to the following tradition (hadith) that al-Bukhari (in Sahih, Vol. 4, pp.166-167, 243), Muslim (in Sahih, Vol. 3, pp. 109-117), al-Tirmidhi (in Jami'al-Sihah, Vol. 4, p. 481), Ibn Majah (in Al-Sunan, Vol. 1, pp. 59-62), al-Nisa'i (in Al-Sunan, Vol. 3, pp. 65-66), Malik ibn Anas (in Al-Muwatta', pp. 204-205), al-Dar Qutni (in Al-Sunan, Vol. 3, pp. 131-132), ad-Darmi (in Al-Sunan, Vol. 2, p. 133), Abu Dawud (in Al-Sunan, Vol. 4 pp.241-246), al-Hakim (in Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 2, pp. 145-154; Vol. 4, p.531), Ahmed ibn Hanbal (in Al-Musnad, Vol. 1, pp. 88,140,147; Vol. 3, pp.56,65) and al-Bayhaqi (in Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 8, pp.170-171) have narrated through a group of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) that he said the following about Dhul-Khuwaysira (the surname for hu'th-Thudayyah Hurqus ibn Zuhayr at-Tamimi, the chief of the Kharijites): "From this very person's posterity, there will rise people who will recite the Holy Quran, but it will not go beyond their throat; they will kill the followers of Islam and will spare the idol-worshippers. They will glance through the teachings of Islam as hurriedly as the arrow passes through its prey. If I were to ever find them, I would kill them like Ad."

Then ibn Abul-Hadid goes on to say the following: "This is the sign for his (Holy Prophet's) Prophethood and prediction of the secret knowledge (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 13, p.183).

There is a reference above to "satan of the pit". This is a reference to Dhu't-Thudayyah (whose full name is already mentioned in a footnote above) who was killed during the battle of Nahrawan by the stroke of lightning from the sky, so there was no need to kill him by the sword. The Holy Prophet (ص) had predicted the way how he would die. Therefore, after the annihilation of the Kharijites at Nahrawan, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) came out in hot pursuit but could not find his body anywhere. In the meantime, ar-Rayyan ibn Sabirah saw forty to fifty bodies in a pit on the bank of the Nahrawan canal. When they were taken out [to be identified], the body of Dhul-Thudayya was found among them. He was called Dhul-Thudayya because of a mass of flesh on his shoulder [which looked like a small breast]. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saw the man's body, he said, "Allah is Great! Neither I spoke a lie nor was I told wrong" (Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 13, pp. 183-184; al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp.3383 - 3384; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, p.348).

Sermon 192

It is related that a companion of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) called Hamman[188], who was a man devoted to worship, and said to him, "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib! Describe to me the pious men in such a way as though I see them." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied saying: "Hamman! Fear Allah and do good deeds because "Verily, Allah is

with those who guard (themselves against evil) and those who do good (to others)" (Holy Quran, 16: 128). But Hamman was not satisfied with this answer and pressured the Imām to provide more details. Thereupon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) praised Allah and extolled Him and sought His blessings on the Holy Prophet (ص) then said the following:

Allah, the most Glorified One, the Sublime, created everything and everyone. He created them without any need for their obedience. The sin of any sinner does not harm Him, nor does the obedience of anyone who obeys Him benefit Him. He has distributed among them their livelihood and has assigned for them their positions in the world.

Thus, the God-fearing, in this world are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their clothing is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put listen to the knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain calm during the time of trials. If there had not been fixed periods (of life) ordained for each one of them, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of (their) eagerness for the reward [awaiting them in the Hereafter] and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart and; so, everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus, to them, Paradise is as though they see it and are enjoying its bliss. To them, Hell is also as if they see it and are suffering from its punishment.

Their hearts are grieved, they are protected against evils, their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty and their souls are chaste. They endure (hardship) for a short while; consequently, they secure comfort for a long time. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them.

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[188] According to ibn Abul-Hadid, this is a reference to Hamman ibn Shurayh, but *allama* al-Majlisi says that apparently this is Hamman ibn Abadah.

The world wants them, but they do not want it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it with a ransom.

During the night, they are up standing on their feet reading portions of the Holy Quran and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse which creates eagerness (for Paradise), they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which inspires fear (of Hell), they bend the ears of their hearts towards it and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend their backs, prostrate on their foreheads, palms, knees and toes, beseeching Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day, they endure, learn and remain virtuous and God-fearing. Fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them, he believes they are sick, although they are not sick at all, and he would say that they have lost their sanity. In fact, a great concern (i.e. fear) has made them look like that.

They are not satisfied with [what they consider as] their minor good deeds and do not regard their major deeds as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deeds. When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he says the following: "I know myself better than others and my Master knows me better than I know. O Allah! Do not deal with me according to what they say, make me better than they think of me and forgive me (my shortcomings) which they do not know."

The peculiarity of any of them is that you would see that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in forbearance, moderation when rich, devotion in worship, gracefulness in hunger, endurance in hardship, desire for what is lawful, pleasure with guidance and hatred for greed. He performs virtuous deeds but still feels alert. In the evening, he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning his anxiety is to remember (Allah). He fearfully passes his night in adoration and rises in the morning in joy - fear lest night is passed in forgetfulness, and joy over the favor and mercy which he is sure to receive. If his soul refuses to endure a thing which it does not like, he does not grant its request towards what it does like. The coolness of his eye lies in what is to last forever, while from the things (of this world) that would not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance and speech with action.

You would see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Only goodness is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah), he is counted among those who remember (Him). But if he is among those who remember, he is never counted among the forgetful. He forgives whoever is unjust to him, and he gives whoever deprives him. He behaves well with whoever behaves ill towards him.

Indecent speech is far from him; his utterance is lenient, his evils are non-existent, his virtues are ever present, his goodness precedes him, and mischief turns away from him. He is dignified during calamities, patient in distresses and thankful in ease. He does not commit excesses against anyone whom he may hate and does not commit sin for the sake of one who loves him. He admits the truth before testimony is brought against him. He does not misappropriate what is placed in his custody and does not forget what he is required to remember. He does not call others bad names, he does not cause harm to his neighbor, he does not feel happy at others' misfortunes, he does not enter into wrong and does not go out of right.

If he is silent, his silence does not grieve him. If he laughs, he does not raise his voice and if he is wronged he endures till Allah takes revenge on his behalf. His own "nafs" is in distress because of his own demeanor, while the people are in ease from him. He exposes himself to hardship for the sake of his Hereafter while letting people feel safe from him. His keeping away from others is asceticism and purification, while his nearness to those to whom he feels close is out of his own kindness and gentleness. His keeping away from others is not out of vanity or arrogance, nor is his nearness to them is flattery or for deception.

It is related that Hamman passed into a deep swoon then expired. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: "Verily, by Allah, I had this fear about him." Then he added: "Effective advice produces such effects on receptive minds." Someone[189] said to him, "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib! How is it you do not receive such an effect?" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied: "Woe unto you! For death there is a fixed hour

[189]This man was Abdullah ibn al-Akwa' who was in the fore-front of the Kharijite movement and was a great opponent of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

which cannot be exceeded and a cause which does not change. Now look, never repeat such talk which Satan had put on your tongue."

Sermon 193

Describing the Hypocrites

We praise Allah for the succor which He has given us in carrying out the obligations of being obedient to Him and in preventing us from disobedience. We ask Him to complete His favors (to us) and to make us hold on to His rope. We testify that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and Messenger. He entered every hardship in pursuit of Allah's pleasure and endured for its sake every grief. His near relatives changed their attitudes towards him, and those who were distant (in kinship) united against him. The Arabs let loose the reins (of their horses to quicken their march) against him and struck the bellies of their mounts to fightt him, so much so that enemies came to his threshold from the remotest places and most distant areas.

I admonish you, O servants of Allah, to fear Allah, and I warn you of the hypocrites because they themselves are misguided and have misguided others as well. They have slipped and will cause others to slip, too. They change into many colors and adopt various ways. They support you with all means but lie in ambush for you at every post. Their hearts are sick while their faces look clear. They walk stealthily and tread like the approach of sickness (over the body). Their words speak of cure, but their deeds are like incurable diseases. They are jealous of ease; they intensify distress and destroy hopes. Their victims are found lying in ambush on every path, while they have means to approach every heart. They have (false) tears for every grief.

They eulogize each other and expect rewards from each other. When they ask something, they insist on it. If they reprove (any one), they disgrace (him), and if they pass a verdict, they commit excesses. They have adopted for every truth a wrong way, for every erect thing a bender, for every living being a killer, for every (closed) door a key and for every night a lamp. They covet, but with despair, in order to maintain with it their markets and propagate for their "handsome" merchandise. When they speak, they create doubts. When they describe, they exaggerate. First they offer easy paths but (afterwards) they make them narrow. In short, they are the party of Satan and the stings of the Fire. "Satan has gained hold on them, so he makes them forget the remembrance of Allah; they

are Satan's Party; Beware! Verily, the party of Satan are the losers" (Holy Quran, 58: 19).

Sermon 194

Praising Allah, Advising about Fear of Allah and Providing Details about the Day of Judgement

Praise be to Allah Who has displayed such effects of His authority and the glory of His sublimity through the wonders of His might, so they dazzle the eyes and render the minds incapable of appreciating the reality of His attributes. I testify that there is no god but Allah by virtue of belief, certainty, sincerity and conviction. I also testify that Muhammad (ص) is His slave and Prophet whom He deputed when the signs of guidance were obliterated and the ways of religion were desolate. So, he threw open the truth, admonished the people, guided them towards righteousness and ordered them to be moderate. May Allah bless him and his descendants.

Be informed, O servants of Allah, that He has not created you for naught and has not left you free. He knows the extent of His favors over you and the quantity of His bounty towards you. Therefore, ask Him for success and for the attainment of objectives. Beg before Him and seek His generosity. No curtain hides you from Him, nor is any door closed before you against Him. He is at every place, in every moment and instance. He is with every man and jinn. Giving does not create any breach in Him. Gifting does not cause Him diminution. A beggar cannot wear Him out [with his persistent pleas] and giving (to others) can never exhaust Him.

One person cannot turn His attention from another, one voice does not detract Him from another, and one grant of favor does not prevent Him from refusing another. Anger does not prevent Him from mercy, mercy does not prevent Him from punishing; His concealment does not hide His manifestation and His manifestation does not prevent Him from concealing. He is near and at the same time distant. He is high and at the same time low, He is manifest and also concealed. He is concealed yet well-known. He lends but is not lent anything. He has not created creation after devising, nor did He receive any assistance on account of fatigue.

I admonish you, O servants of Allah, to fear Allah, for it is the rein and the mainstay (of religion). Hold fast to its salient tenets, keep

hold of its realities. It would take you to abodes of ease, to places of comfort, to fortresses of safety and to houses of honor on the Day (of Judgement) when eyes will be wide open (see Holy Quran, 14:42), when there will be darkness all around and when small groups of camels pregnant for ten months will be allowed free grazing. And when the Horn is blown, every living being will then die, every voice will be muted. The high mountains and the hard rocks will crumble (to pieces) so that their hard stones will turn into moving sand and their bases will become level. (On that day) there will be none to intercede, no kinship to ward off (trouble), and no excuse will be of any avail.

Sermon 195

The Condition of the World at the Time of the Proclamation of Prophethood, the Transience of this World and the State of its Inhabitants .

Allah deputed the Prophet (ص) when no sign of guidance existed, no beacon was giving light and no passage was clear.

I admonish you, O servants of Allah, to fear Allah, and I warn you of this world which is a house from which departure is inevitable, and it is a place of discomfort. Whoever lives in it has to depart, and whoever stays here has to leave. It is drifting with its people like a boat which severe winds dash (here and there) in the deep sea. Some get drowned and die, while others escape on the surface of the waves; winds push them with their currents and carry them towards their dangers. So, whatever is drowned cannot be restored and whatever escapes is on the way to destruction.

O servants of Allah! You should know now that you have to perform (good) deeds because (presently) your tongues are free, your bodies are healthy, your limbs have movement, the area of your coming and going is vast and the course for your running is wide, before the loss of opportunity or the approach of death. Take death's approach as imminent and do not think it will come (hereafter).

Sermon 196

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Attachment to the Holy Prophet (ص), Performance of Funeral Rites for Him (ص)

Those companions of Muhammad (ص), the custodians (of the Divine messages), know that I never disobeyed Allah or His Messenger1 at all and by virtue of the courage with which Allah honored me, I supported him with my life on occasions when even the brave turned away and feet lagged behind.

When the Prophet (ص) died, his head was on my chest and his (last) breath blew over my palms, and I passed it over my face. I performed his funeral ghusul (ceremonial bath), may Allah bless him and his descendants, and the angels helped me. The house and the courtyard were full of them. One party of them was descending while another was ascending. My ears continually caught their humming voice, as they invoked Allah's blessing on him, till we buried him in his grave. Thus, who can have greater rights with him than I during his life or after his death? Therefore, depend on your enemy because I swear by the One Who is such that there is no god but He, that I am on the path of truth and that they (the enemy) are on the misleading path of wrongdoing. You hear what I say and I seek Allah's forgiveness for myself and for you.

Ibn Abul-Hadid has written (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 10, pp. 180-183) that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's saying that he never disobeyed the commands of the Prophet (ص) is a sort of taunt to those who felt no hesitation in rejecting the Prophet's commands and sometimes even checked him. For example, when, at the time of the peace of al-Hudaybiya, the Prophet (ص) was inclined to negotiate peace with the unbelievers from among the tribesmen of Quraish, one of the companions became so enraged that he expressed doubts about the Prophethood of the Prophet (ص) whereupon Abu Bakr had to say: "Woe be to you! Keep clinging to him. He is certainly Allah's Messenger, and He will not ruin him."

The introduction to the oath, "inna" and the word of emphasis "lam", which are used here [in the original Arabic text] to create conviction about the Prophethood shows that the addressee had gone further than mere doubt because these words of emphasis are employed only when the stage of denial has been reached. However, if belief required absence of doubt, the presence of doubt must imply defect in the belief, as Allah says the following: "The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, they do not doubt thereafter" (Holy Quran, 49: 15).

Similarly, when the Prophet (ص) intended to perform the funeral prayers for Ubayy ibn Salul, the same companion said to him, "How do you intend to seek forgiveness for this chief of hypocrites?" And he even drew away the Prophet (ص) by pulling the ends of his shirt... Then the Prophet (ص) had to say, "No deed nothing besides the command of Allah." In the same way, the Prophet's command to accompany the troops led by Usamah ibn Zayd was ignored. The greatest of all such insolence was displayed with regard to the Prophet's intention to write down his advice to the nation. When such a blame was laid against the Prophet (ص), a behavior which proves an absence of belief in the commands of the Shari'a and creates doubt about whether each command was based on the Divine revelation or whether (Allah forbid) it was just the result of "mental disorder".

Who can deny that the ever-successful lion of Allah, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), shielded the Prophet (ص) on every critical occasion and performed the duty of protecting him by dint of the courage and valor gifted to him by Allah? The first occasion of risking his life was when the unbelievers from the tribe of Quraish decided finally to kill the Prophet (ص). Ali slept on the Prophet's bed surrounded by enemies and under the direct peril of swords, whereby the enemies were not able to succeed in their plot. Then, in those battles where the enemies used to attack the Prophet (ص) and where the feet of even the reputed heroes could not stand firm, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) remained steadfast with the banner (of Islam) in his hand. Abdul-Barr and al-Hakim writes the following about it: "Ibn Abbas says that Ali had four qualities which no one else possessed. First, he was the first among the Arabs and the non-Arabs to have offered prayers with the Messenger of Allah. Second, he always had the banner of Islam in his hand in every battle. Third, when people ran away from the Prophet (ص), Ali remained with him, and Fourth, he was the one who gave the Prophet (ص) his funeral ablution and placed him in his grave" (Al_Isti'ab, Vol. 3, p. 1090; Al-Mustadrak Ala Sahihayn, Vol. 3, p. 111).

A study of the holy wars of Islam fought during the Prophet's time leaves no doubt that, except for the battle of Tabuk in which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did not participate, all other battles testify to his great performance and all the successes are due to his valour. Thus, in the battle of Badr, seventy unbelievers were killed, half of whom were killed by Ali's sword. In the battle of Uhud, when victory changed into defeat as

a result of the Muslims engaging themselves in the collection of booty, they fled away under the sudden attack of the enemy, but Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) remained steadfast, taking jihad to be a religious obligation and displayed such conspicuous courage in support and in defense of the Prophet (ص) that the Prophet (ص) himself acknowledged it as did arch-angel Gabriel. Again, in the battle of the Trench (al-Khandaq), the Prophet (ص) was accompanied by three thousand combatants, but none dared to face `Amr ibn Abd-Wudd. At last, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) killed him and saved the Muslims from ignominy. In the battle of Hunain, the Muslims were proud of their number because they were ten thousand while the unbelievers were only four thousand, but here, too, they leapt onto the booty, as a consequence of which the unbelievers gained the opportunity and pounced upon them. Taken by surprise thus, the Muslims fled away as the Holy Quran says the following verse: "Most certainly did Allah help you in many (battle) fields and on the day of Hunain when made your great number was to your liking, but your being superior in number availed you nothing, and the earth was straitened against you despite its expanse, then you turned back in retreat" (9: 25).

On this occasion, too, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) remained steadfast like a rock and eventually, with Allah's support, victory was achieved.

Sermon 197

Allah's Attribute of Omniscience

Allah knows the cries of the beasts in the forest, the sins of the people in seclusion, themovements of the fishes in the deep seas and the rising of the water by tempestuous winds. I testify that Muhammad (ص) is the choice of Allah, the conveyor of His revelation and the Messenger of His mercy.

Why Fearing Allah

I admonish you to fear Allah Who created you. To Him is your return, with Him lies the success of your aims, at Him terminate (all) your desires, toward Him runs your path of righteousness and He is the aim of your fears (for seeking protection). Certainly, fear of Allah is themedicine for your hearts, the sight for the blindness of your spirits, the cure for the ailments of your bodies, the rectifier of the evils of your breasts, the

purifier of the pollution of your minds, the light of the darkness of your eyes, the consolation for the fear of your heart and the brightness for the gloom of your ignorance.

Therefore, make obedience to Allah the way of your life, not only your outside covering. Make it your inner habit instead of only outer routine, subtle enough to enter through your ribs (up to the heart), the guide for all your affairs, the watering place for your getting down (on the Day of Judgement), the one who intercedes for the achievement of your aims, the asylum for the day of your fear, the lamp of the interior of your graves, the company for your long loneliness and the deliverance from the troubles of your abodes. Certainly, obedience to Allah is a protection against encircling calamities, expected dangers and the flames of burning fires.

Therefore, whoever entertains fear of Allah, troubles remain away from him after having been near, affairs become sweet after their bitterness, waves (of troubles) recede from him after having crowded over him, difficulties become easy for him after occurring, generosity rains fast over him after shortage, mercy bends over him after it had been loath, the favors (of Allah) spring forth on him after they had been dried and blessing descends over him in showers after being scanty. So, fear Allah Who benefits you with His good advice, preaches to you through His Messenger and obliges you with His favors. Devote yourselves to His worship and acquit yourselves of the obligation of obeying Him.

About Islam

Islam is the religion which Allah has chosen for Himself, developed it before His eyes, preferred it as the best among His creations, established its pillars on His love. He has disgraced other religions by giving honor to it. He has humiliated all communities before its sublimity; He has humbled its enemies with His kindness and made its opponents lonely by according it His support. He has smashed the pillars of misguidance with its columns. He has quenched the thirst of the thirsty with its cisterns and filled the cisterns through those who draw its water.

He made Islam such that its constituent parts cannot break, its joins cannot separate, its structure cannot fall, its columns cannot decay, its plant cannot be uprooted, its time does not end, its laws do not expire, its twigs cannot be cut, its parts do not become narrow, its ease does not change into difficulty, its clarity is not affected by gloom, its straightness does not acquire curvature, its wood has no crookedness, its vast paths

have no narrowness, its lamp knows no putting off and its sweetness has no bitterness.

It consists of columns whose bases Allah has fixed in truthfulness and whose foundation He has strengthened, and of sources the streams of which are ever full of water, of lamps the flames of which are full of light and of beacons with the help of which travelers get guidance and of signs through which a way is found to its highways and of watering places which provide water to those who come to them. Allah has placed in Islam the height of His pleasure, the pinnacle of His pillars and the prominence of His obedience. Before Allah, therefore, its columns stand strong, its structure is lofty, its proofs are bright, its fires are aflame, its authority is strong, its beacons are high and its destruction is difficult. You should, therefore, honor it, follow it, fulfil its obligations and accord the status due to it.

About the Holy Prophet (ص)

Allah, the Glorified One, deputed Muhammad (ص) with the truth at a time when the destruction of the world was near and the next life was at hand, when its brightness was turning into gloom after shining. It has become troublesome for its inhabitants, its surface had become rough and its decay had approached near. This was during the exhaustion of its life at the approach of signs (of its decay), the ruin of its inhabitants, the breaking of its links, the dispersal of its affairs, the decay of its signs, the divulging of its secret matters and the shortening of its length. Allah made him responsible for conveying His message and (a means of) honor for his people, a period of bloom for the men of his days, a source of dignity for the supporters and an honor for his helpers.

About the Holy Quran

Then Allah sent him the Book as a light whose flames cannot be extinguished, a lamp whose gleam does not die, a sea whose depth cannot be sounded, a way whose direction does not mislead, a ray whose light does not darken, a separator (of good from evil) whose arguments do not weaken, one who clarifies, one whose foundations cannot be dismantled, a cure which leaves no room for disease, an honor whose supporters are not defeated and the truth whose helpers are not abandoned. Therefore, it is the mine of belief and its nucleus, the source of knowledge and its oceans, the plantation of justice and its pools, the foundation stone of Islam and its construction, the valleys of truth and its plains, an ocean

which those who draw water cannot empty, springs which those who draw water cannot dry up, a watering place which those who come to take water cannot exhaust, a staging place in moving towards which travelers do not get lost, signs which no trader fails to see and a highland which those who approach it cannot surpass.

Allah has made it quench the thirst of the learned, a bloom for the hearts of religious jurists, a highway for the ways of the righteous, a cure after which there is no ailment, a glory with which there is no darkness, a rope whose grip is strong, a stronghold whose peak is invulnerable and honor for whoever owes it, a peace for whoever enters it, a guidance for whoever follows it, an excuse for whoever adopts it, an argument for whoever argues with it, a witness for whoever quarrels with it, a success for whoever argues with it, a carrier of burden for whoever seeks the way, a shield for whoever arms himself (against misguidance), a knowledge for whoever listens carefully, a worthy story for whoever relates it and a final verdict of whoever passes judgements.

Sermon 198

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Advising His Companions about Prayers

Pledge to uphold prayers and to remain steady on it; offer prayer as much as possible and seek nearness (to Allah) through it because it is (imposed) upon the believers as a timed ordinance (Holy Quran, 4:103). Have you not heard the reply of the people of Hell when they are asked: "What has brought you into hell?" They shall say: "We were not of those who offered regular prayers!" (Holy Quran, 74: 42-43). Certainly, prayer drops out sins like the leaves of trees drop and removes them as ropes are removed from the necks of cattle. The Messenger of Allah (ص) likened it to a flowing river at the doorstep of a person who takes a bath in it five times a day. Will then any dirt remain on him?

Its obligation is recognized by those believers whom neither the adornment of property nor the coolness of the eyes produced by children can turn away from it. Allah, the Glorified One, says the following: "... men whom neither merchandise nor any diversion distracts them from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying the zakat (Qur;an, 24: 37).

Even after receiving assurance of Paradise, the Messenger of Allah (ص) used to exert himself for the prayers because of the command of Allah, the Glorified One. "... enjoin prayer on your followers and adhere thereto steadfastly" (Holy Quran, 20: 132).

Then the Holy Prophet (ص) used to enjoin his followers to pray and exert himself for its sake.

About the Islamic Tax of Zakat

Then Islamic tax has been laid down along with prayers as a sacrifice (to be offered) by the followers of Islam. Whoever pays it by way of purifying his spirit, it serves as a purifier for him, a protection and a shield against the fire (of Hell). No one, therefore, (who pays it) should feel attached to it afterwards, nor should he feel grieved. Whoever pays it without the intention of purifying his heart, expecting through it to gain more [material rewards], he is certainly ignorant of the Sunnah; he is allowed no reward for it; his action goes to waste, and his hope for repentance is excessive!

Fulfillment of Trust

As regarding the fulfillment of trust, whoever does not pay attention to it will be disappointed. It was placed before the mighty skies, the vast earth and the high mountains, but none was found to be stronger, more vast, or higher than it. If anything could be unapproachable because of height, vastness, power or strength, they will have been unapproachable. But they felt afraid of the evil consequences (of failing in fulfilling a trust) and noticed what a weaker person did not realize it, and this was man. "Verily, he [man] was (proven) unjust, ignorant" (Holy Quran, 33: 72).

Surely, Allah, the Glorified One, the Sublime, nothing is hidden from Him of whatever people do in their nights or days. His knowledge encompasses all things. Your limbs are a witness [against you], the organs of your body constitute an army (against yourself), your inner self serves Him as eyes (to watch over your sins) and your loneliness is open to Him.

Sermon 199

Treason and Treachery of Mu`awiyah and the Fate of Those Guilty of Treason

By Allah, Mu`awiyah is not more shrewd than I am, but he deceives and commits evil deeds. Had I not been hateful of deceitfulness, I will have been the most cunning of all men. But (the fact is that) deceit is a sin and sin is disobedience (of Allah). Every deceitful person will have a banner by which he will be recognized on the Day of Judgement. By Allah, I cannot be made forgetful by strategy, nor can I be overpowered by hardships.

People who are ignorant of religion and its ethics, free from the shackles of religious laws and unaware of the concept of punishment and reward find abundance of excuses, methods and means for the achievement of their objectives. They can find ways to succeed at every stage. But when they find the dictates of humanity, or Islam, or the limitations imposed by ethics and religious laws as impeding their designs, their chances of devising and finding vile means become narrow and the possibility of their action becomes limited. Mu`awiyah's influence and control was the result of these devices and ways in which he knew no impediment nor any obstacle of what is lawful or unlawful, nor did the fear of the Day of Judgement prevent him from acting defiantly. Describing the character of Mu`awiyah, allama ar-Raghib al-Isfahani writes the following: "His aim was always to achieve his objective whether lawful or unlawful. He did not care for religion, nor did he ever think of the Divine chastisement. Thus, in order to maintain his power, he resorted to false statements and concoctions, practiced all sorts of deceit and contrivance. When he saw that success was not possible without entangling Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in war, he roused Talhah and az-Zubayr against him. When success could not be achieved by this means, he instigated the Syrians, bringing about the civil war of Siffin. And when the status of his rebellion became exposed through the killing of Ammar, he at once duped the people by saying that Ali was responsible for killing him as he had brought him into the battlefield. And on another occasion, he interpreted the words 'rebellious party' in the hadith of the Prophet (ص) to mean 'avenging party', trying desperately to prove that Ammar would be killed by the group that would seek revenge of Othman's blood, although the next portion of this statement, that is, 'he will call them towards Paradise while they will call him to Hell', does not leave any room for interpretation. When there was no hope of victory

even by these cunning means, he contrived to raise the Holy Quran on the spears, although in his view neither the Holy Quran nor its commandments carried any weight. If he had really aimed at deriving a decision from the Holy Quran, he should have put this demand before the commencement of the battle. When it became known to him that the decision had been secured by `Amr ibn al-As by deceiving Abu Musa al-Ash`ari and that it did not have even a remote connection with the Holy Quran, he should not have accepted it and should have punished `Amr ibn al-As for this cunning or at least warned and rebuked him. But on the contrary, the latter's performance was much appreciated and, in reward, he was made the Governor of Egypt.

In contrast to this outrage, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's conduct was a high specimen of religious law and ethics. He kept in view the requirements of truth and righteousness even in adverse circumstances and did not allow his virtuous life to be tarnished by the views of deceit and contrivance. If he wished, he could face cunning by cunning and Mu`awiyah's shameful activities could have been answered by similar measures. For example, when he posted guards on the Euphrates and stopped the supply of its water (to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's men), then the supply of water could have been cut off from them also on the grounds that since they had occupied the Euphrates, it was lawful to retaliate. In this way, they could be overpowered by weakening their fighting power. But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) could never tarnish his hands with such an inhuman deed which was not permitted by any law or code of ethics, although common people regard such deeds against the enemy as lawful and call this duplicity of character for the achievement of success as a normal policy and administrative ability. But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) could never think of strengthening his power by fraud or duplicity of behavior on any occasion. Thus, when people advised him to retain the officers who had been appointed during the government of Othman and to befriend Talhah and az-Zubayr by assigning them governorship of Kūfa and Basra and make use of Mu`awiyah's ability in administration by giving him the government of Syria..., Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) rejected this advice and preferred the commandments of the religious law over worldly expediency and openly declared about Mu`awiyah as follow: "If I allow Mu`awiyah to retain what he already has, I will be one who takes those who lead (people) astray as helpers" (refer to Holy Quran, 18: 51)..

Those who look at apparent successes do not care to find out by what means the success has been achieved. They support anyone whom

they see as succeeding by means of cunning and deception, and they begin to regard him an administrator, a man of intelligence, a politician, an intellectually brilliant man..., and so on, while whoever does not deploy cunning and fraudulent methods due to his adherence to Islamic commandments and the Divine instructions and prefers failure over success secured through wrong methods is regarded as ignorant of politics and weak in foresight. They do not feel it necessary to think what difficulties and impediments exist in the way of a person who adheres to principles and laws which prevent him from proceeding forward even after approaching near success.

Sermon 200

One Should Not Be Afraid of the Scarcity of Those Who Tread on the Right Path

O people! Do not wonder at the small number of those who follow the right path because people throng only around the table (of this world) whose edibles are few but whose hunger is insatiable.

O people! Certainly what gathers people together is (their) agreement (to good or bad) and (their) disagreement, for only one individual killed the camel of Thamud[190] but Allah held all of them as

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[190]Thamud, an ancient Arabian tribe or group of tribes, seems to have been prominent from about the 4th Century B.C. to the first half of the 7th Century A.D. Their homeland, called the Valley of al-Qura [Wadi al-Qura, valley of the towns], was lying on the way between Hijaz and Syria and bore this name because it consisted of several towns. Allah deputed for their guidance and directions Prophet Salih who preached to them as Allah relates in his story: "And to (the people of) Thamud (We did send) their brother Salih. He said, 'O my people! Worship Allah (alone); you have no god other than Him. Indeed there came to you a clear proof from your Master: this is the she-camel of Allah (which) to you is a Sign; so, leave it to pasture in Allah's earth and do not touch her with any harm or else you should be seized with a painful chastisement. And remember when He made you successors after the (people) of Ad and settled you in the land. You build mansions on its plain and hew the mountains into dwellings. So, remember the bounties of Allah and do not seek to do mischief on earth.' Said the chiefs of those who were puffed up with pride from among his people to those who were regarded as weak to those who believed from among them (sarcastically): 'Do you know that Salih is sent by his Lord?!' Said they: 'Verily, we believe in what he has been sent.' Said those who were puffed up with pride: 'Verily we, in that which you believe, are disbelievers.' They hamstrung the she-camel and rebelled against the command of their Lord and

liable for punishment because all of them joined him with their acquiescence. Thus, Allah, the Glorified One, has said the following: "Then they hamstrung her and became regretful" (Holy Quran, 26: 157).

Then their land declined by sinking (into earth) as the spike of a plough pierces unploughed weak land. O people! Whoever treads the clear path (of guidance) reaches the spring of water, and whoever abandons it strays into a barren desert.

Sermon 201

What Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Said on the Occasion of the Burial of the Supreme Lady, Fatima (ع), While Addressing the Holy Prophet (ص) at His Grave :

O Prophet of Allah (ص)! Peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. O Prophet of Allah (ص), my patience about your chosen (daughter) has been exhausted and my power of endurance has weakened, except that I have ground for consolation in having endured the great hardship and heart-rending event of your separation. I laid you down in your grave when you breathed your last (as your head was) between my neck and chest.

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said: 'O Salih! Bring us that with which you did threaten us, if you are [as you claim] one of the Messengers.' Then the earthquake seized them (while they were unaware), so they became in their dwellings motionless. Then he turned away from them and said: 'O my people! Indeed I did deliver to you the message of my Lord and did admonish you, but you do not love those who admonish you'" (Holy Quran, 7: 73-79). (The people of) Thamud belied the warners and said: "What?! A single man from among us [thus dares to warn us]! And we are to follow him?! Verily, then, we shall be straying and in distress. It is that reminding has been bestowed on him (alone) of all people from among us?! Nay! He is a great liar and an insolent one!' Soon they shall know on the morrow (as to) who the liar is, the insolent one. (O Our Messenger Salih!) verily We are going to send the she-camel as a trial for them; so, watch them and be patient. And (you O Salih!) make them aware (beforehand) that the water is (to be) divided between them, and every drinking share shall be witnessed. But they called their companions, then he pursued and hamstrung her. How (great) was My chastisement and My warning? Verily We sent upon them a single (violent) blast and they were (all) like the dry stubble used by a fencer in a fence" (Holy Quran, 54: 23-31).

"Verily we are Allah's and verily to Him shall we return" (Holy Quran, 2: 156).

Now, the trust has been returned, and what had been given has been taken back. As to my grief, it knows no bounds, and as to my nights, they will remain sleepless till Allah chooses for me the house in which you are now residing.

Certainly, your daughter will apprise you of the joining together of your[191] umma (people) for the aim of oppressing her. Ask her for the details and get all the news. This has happened only a short period of time had elapsed, yet your remembrance has already disappeared... My Salam be to you both, the Salam of a grief-stricken one, ndighdf a disgusted nor a hateful one. If I go away, it is not because I am weary (of you), and if I

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[191]The treatment meted out to the daughter of the Prophet (ص) after his death was extremely painful and sad. Although Sayyidatul-Nisa'[head of all women of mankind], Fatima (ع), did not live in this world more than a few months after the death of her most revered father, the Prophet (ص), yet even this short period has a long tale of grief to tell and many woes. In this regard, the first scene that strikes the eyes is the fact that the arrangements for the funeral rites of the Prophet (ص) had not yet been made when the contest for power and authority started at the *saqifa* [shed] of Banu Sa'idah. Naturally, their leaving the body of the Prophet (ص) (without burial) must have deeply injured the grief-stricken heart of Sayyidatul Nisa', Fatima (ع). She saw how those who had professed love and attachment to the Prophet (ص)) during his life-life became so engrossed in their machinations for pursuing power and authority, so much so that instead of consoling his only daughter, they did not even care to know when the Prophet (ص) was to be given his funeral rites and when he was to be buried. And the way they "consoled" her was by crowding at her house after having brought firewood in order to set fire to her house and to burn everyone inside it. All of this they did in order to secure the oath of allegiance by such brute force from her husband, Imam Ali (ع), and from Ahl al-Bayt (ع). They justified all of this coercion, compulsion and violence to achieve their goal of usurping the power of the government for themselves. In fact, all these excesses were to obliterate the prestigious status of this house. They thus hoped it might not regain its lost prestige on any occasion in the future. With this aim in view, and in order to crush her economic status and that of her family, by confiscating her (estate of) Fadak through trickery and falsehood..., the ultimate effect was that Sayyidatul-Nisa' Fatima (ع) was killed with grief in her heart, and even then, none was there to witness her burial. Till now, nobody even knows where she was buried... Love for this world thus blinds people.

stay, it is not due to lack of belief in what Allah has promised those who endure.

Sermon 202

Transience of this World, the Importance of Collecting Provisions for the Next Life

O people! Certainly this world is a passage while the next is a place of permanent abode. So, take from the passage (all that you can) for the permanent abode. Do not tear away your curtain before the One Who is aware of your secrets. Take your hearts away from this world before your bodies exit out of it. Herein, you have been put on trial, and you have been created for the other world. When a man dies, people ask what (property) he has left, while the angels ask what (good actions) he has sent forward [to his Hereafter]. May Allah bless you; send forward something; it will be a loan for you. Do not leave everything behind, for that will be a burden on you.[192]

Sermon 203

What Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Provided the Following General Advice to His Companions, Warning Them about the Perils of the Day of Judgement :

May Allah have mercy on you! Prepare provisions for the [imminent] journey [to the life to come] because the call for departure has been announced. Regard your stay in this world as very short, and return (to Allah) with the best provisions with you because surely, in front of you lies a valley difficult to climb and places of stay full of fears and dangers. You have to get there and to permanently stay. And be admonished that the eyes of death are approaching you, fixed on you. It is as though you are (already) in the talons of death, and it has struck you. Difficult affairs and distressing dangers have crushed you into it. You should, therefore, cut away all the attachments of this world and seek assistance with the provision of the fear of Allah.

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[192]When Hazrat Khadija, first wife of the Prophet (ص), passed away, she left neither a gold dinar nor a silver dirham. Thus are we told by historians. How many people are thus admonished, and how many act upon this admonishment? ─ Ed.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “part of this statement has been quoted before through another narration.”

Sermon 204

Having Sworn Allegiance to Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع), Talhah and Az-zubayr Complained to Him That He Had Not Consulted Them or Sought Their “Advice” in the Affairs (of State). Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Replied as Follows :

You both frown over a small issue and leave aside many big ones. Can you tell me of anything wherein you have a right of which I have deprived you, or a share which was due to you and which I have held away from you, or any Muslim who has laid any claim before me and I have been unable to decide it or have been ignorant of it, or committed a mistake about it?

By Allah, I had no liking for the caliphate, nor have I had any interest in the government, but you yourselves invited me to it and prepared me for it. When the caliphate came to me, I kept the Book of Allah in my view and all that Allah had put the rein for us, all that according to what He has commanded us to decide. I followed it and also acted on whatever the Prophet (ص) had laid down as his Sunnah. In this matter, I did not need your advice nor the advice of anyone else, nor has there been any order of which I was ignorant so that I ought to have consulted you or my Muslim brethren. If it were so, I would not have turned away from you or from others. As regarding your reference to the question of equality (in the distribution of shares from the Muslim common fund), this is a matter in which I have not taken a decision according to my own opinion, nor have I done it by my caprice. But I found and you, too, (must have) found, that whatever the Prophet (ص) brought had been finalized. Therefore, I felt no need to turn towards you about a share which had been determined by Allah and in which His verdict has been passed. By Allah, in this matter, therefore, you two or anyone else can have no favor from me. May Allah keep our hearts and yours in righteousness, and may He grant us and yourselves endurance.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) added: “May Allah have mercy on the person who, when he sees the truth, supports it, when he sees falsehood, he rejects it and who helps the truth against anyone who is wrong.”

Sermon 205

During the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Heard Some of His Men Verbally Abusing the Syrians, So He Said the Following :

I dislike for you to start taunting them, but if you describe their deeds and recount their situations, it will be a better mode of speech and a more convincing argument. Instead of abusing them you should say, "O Allah! Save our blood and theirs, produce reconciliation between us and them and lead them out of their misguidance so that whoever is ignorant of the truth may know it and whoever inclines towards rebellion and rebellion may turn away from it."

Sermon 206

In the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Saw Imam Al-hasan Proceeding Rapidly to Fight, So He Said the Following :

Hold back this young man on my behalf lest he should cause my ruin because I am loath to send these two (meaning al-Hassan and al-Hussain) towards death, lest the descending line of the Prophet (ص) is cut off permanently by their death.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's words 'amiku anni hadha'l-ghulam' (i.e. Hold back this young man on my behalf) represents the highest and the most eloquent form of expression."

Sermon 207

When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Companions Expressed Displeasure about His Attitude Concerning the Arbitration[1], He Said the Following :

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[193]When the surviving forces of the Syrians lost ground and were ready to run away from the field, Mu`awiyah changed the tables of the battle by using the Holy Quran as his instrument of political strategy, succeeding in creating such a division among the Iraqis that, despite Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's efforts at counseling, they were not prepared to take any forward step. They insisted on stopping the war, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), too, had to reluctantly

O people! Matters between me and you went as I wished till war exhausted you. By Allah, it has overtaken some of you while leaving others, completely weakening your enemy. Till yesterday, I was giving orders but today I am being given orders! Till yesterday, I was dissuading people (from wrong deeds), but today I am being dissuaded! You have now shown a liking to live in this world, and it is not for me to bring you to what you dislike.

Sermon 208

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Went to Inquire about the Health of His Companion Al-Ala' Ibn Ziyad al-Harithi. When He Noticed the Vastness of His Mansion Estate, He Said the Following :

What will you do with this vast house in this world, although you need this house more in the next world? If you want to take it to the next world, you can entertain in it guests and be regardful of kinship and discharge all (your) obligations according to their accrual. In this way, you will be able to take it to the next world.

Then al-Ala said to him: "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! I want to complain to you about my brother Asim ibn Ziyad." Imam Ali ibn Abu

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agree to arbitration. Among these people there were some who had actually been duped, believing that they were being asked to abide by the Holy Quran, but there were others who had become weary of the long duration of the war and had lost stomach for it, thus cowering. Then people got a good opportunity to stop the war; so, they cried hoarse for its postponements. There were others who had accompanied Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) because of his temporal authority but did not support him by heart, nor did they aim at achieving victory for him. There were some people who had expectations with Mu`awiyah and had started attaching hopes to him for worldly gains, while there were some who were, from the very beginning, [covertly] in league with him. In these circumstances, and with such an army, it was really due to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's political ability and competence of military control and administration that he carried out the war up to this stage. Had Mu`awiyah not adopted this trick, there could have been no doubt in Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's victory because the military power of the Syrian forces had been exhausted and defeat was hovering over their heads. In this regard, Ibn Abul-Hadīd writes the following: "Malik al-Ashtar had reached Mu`awiyah and [angrily] grabbed him by the neck. The entire might of the Syrians had been smashed. Only so much movement was discernable in them as remains in the tail of a lizard which is killed, but the tail continues hopping right and left" (*Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 11, pp.30-1).

Talib (ع) inquired: "What is the matter with him?" Al-Ala' said the following: "He has put on a woolen coat and cut off himself from the world." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "Let me see him." When the man came, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him, "O enemy of yourself! Certainly, the evil one (Satan) has misguided you. Do you feel no compassion for your wife and children? Do you believe that if you use those things which Allah has made lawful for you, He will dislike you? You are too unimportant for Allah to do so." The man said, "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! You yourself put on coarse outfits and eat rough food." The Imam replied thus: "Woe unto you! I am not like you. Certainly, Allah, the Sublime, has made it obligatory on true leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty."

Since ancient times, asceticism and the abandonment of worldly attachments has been regarded as a means of purification of the spirit and importance of the soul. Consequently, those who wished to lead a life of abstention and meditation used to go out of the cities and towns to stay in forests and caves in the mountains and stay there concentrating on Allah according to their own way of thinking. They would eat only if a casual traveler or the inhabitant of nearby dwellings gave them anything to eat; otherwise, they remained contented with the fruits of wild trees and the water of the streams. Thus did they pass their life away from the public. Actually, this way of "worship" commenced in a way that was forced by the oppression and cruelty of rulers. Certain people left their houses and, in order to avoid the grip of such rulers, hid in some wilderness or a cave in a mountain, engaging themselves in worship of and devotion to Allah. Later on, this forced asceticism acquired a voluntary form and people began to retire to caves and hollows of their own volition. Thus, it became an accepted way that whoever aimed at spiritual development retired to some corner after severing himself from all worldly ties. This method remained in vogue for centuries. Even nowadays, some traces of this way of "worship" are found among Buddhists and Christians.

The moderate views of Islam do not, however, agree with the monastic life style. In order to attain spiritual development, one does not have to abandon lawful worldly enjoyments and pleasures, nor should a Muslim leave his house and fellow men and keep himself occupied in such sort of "worship." One must not thus hide in some corner. The concept of worship in Islam is not confined to a few particular rituals. Islam regards the earning of one's livelihood through lawful means, sympathy with and concern about others, good behavior, and cooperation

with and assistance of others are absolutely important, so important that they are the stuff of true worship. If an individual ignores his responsibilities and does not fulfil his obligations towards his wife and children, nor does he occupy himself with earning a livelihood but instead spends all his time meditating, he ruins his life and does not fulfil the purpose of living in this world. If this were Allah's aim behind creating His servants, what would have been the need for creating and populating the world especially when there was already a category of beings who all the time are engaged in worshipping and adoring the Lord of Lords, seeking forgiveness for His servants?

The Creator has made man stand at the cross-roads of options where the mid-way represents the center of guidance. If he deviates from this point of moderation even a bit, tilting towards this way or that, there is nothing but sheer misguidance for him. That mid-way is that he should neither bend towards this world to such an extent that he ignores the next life, devoting himself entirely to this one, nor should he abstain from this world to the extent that he has no regard for nor interest in anything in it, confining himself to some corner, isolating himself from everyone. Since Allah has created man and placed him in this world, man should follow the code of life for living in this world. He should partake of the comforts and pleasures bestowed by Allah within moderate limits. Eating and enjoying things made lawful by Allah does not go against Allah's worship. Rather, Allah has created these things for the very purpose that they should be enjoyed, and so that He would be thanked for providing them for mankind. That is why those who were chosen and preferred by Allah from among all His servants lived in this world with others eating, drinking, marrying and fathering children just like all others. They did not feel the need to turn their faces away from the people of this world and adopt a norm of life in the wilderness, in caves of mountains as their abodes, or in places distant from the public. On the other hand, they remembered Allah, remained disentangled from worldly affairs and did not forget death despite the pleasures and comforts of this life.

The life of asceticism sometimes produces such evils that ruin the next life for the "ascetic" person also as well as ruining this one. Such an individual proves to be the true portrait of one who loses this life as well as the next. When natural urges are not satisfied in the lawful and legal way, the mind turns into a center of evil-insinuated ideas, becoming incapable of performing worship with peace and concentration. And sometimes passions overcome the ascetic to the extent that he would break all moral fetters, devoting himself completely to their satisfaction. Consequently, man falls into an abyss of ruin from which it is impossible

to extract himself. That is why religious laws accord a greater status to the worship performed by a family man than that by a non-family man because the former can exercise mental peace and concentration in the worship and rituals.

Individuals who put on the cloak of Sufism and make a loud show of their spiritual greatness are cut off from the path of Islam and are ignorant of its wide teachings. They have been misled by Satan and, relying on their self-formed concepts, tread wrongful paths. Eventually, their misguidance becomes so serious that they begin to regard their leaders as having attained such a level that their word is like the word of Allah, and their deed is as though that of Allah... Sometimes, they regard themselves as being beyond all the bounds and limitations of religious laws, considering every evil deed as lawful for them. This deviation from the faith and creed is labeled as Sufism. Its unlawful principles are called tariqah (way of achieving communion with Allah) and the followers of this cult are known as Sufis. First, Abu Hashim al-Kufi al-Shami adopted this title. He was of an Umayyad descent and a fatalist (believing that man is bound to act as pre-ordained by Allah). The reason for giving him this name was that in order to make a show of his asceticism and fear of Allah, he put on a woolen cloak. Later on, this title became common and various grounds were put forth as the bases of this name. For example, one ground is that sufi has three letters: the sad, waw and fa'. Sad stands for sabr, endurance, sidq, truthfulness, and safa, purity of heart. The waw, according to them, stands for wudd, love or affection, wird (repetition of Allah's Name) and wafa', faithfulness to Allah. The fa' stands for fard, unity or oneness, faqr, poverty or destitution, and fana', death or absorption in the Self of Allah. The second view is that it has been derived from "as-Suffah", a platform near the Prophet's mosque which had a covering of date-palm leaves and which housed a number of poor and homeless companions of the Prophet (ص). Those who stayed there were called ashabus-Suffah (people of the platform). The third view is that the name of the progenitor of an Arab tribe was Sufah and his tribe performed the duties of serving the pilgrims and the Ka`ba, and it is with reference to their regard that this tribe and those people were called Sufis. This group is divided among various sects but the basic sects are seven only as follows:

1) al-Wahdatiyyah (unitarian): This sect believes in the oneness of all existence. Its belief is that everything IN this world is Allah, so much so that they assign to even polluted things the same divine status. They liken Allah with the river and the waves rising in it, arguing that the waves which sometimes rise and sometimes fall have no separate

existence other than the river, but their existence is exactly the existence of the river. Therefore, nothing can be separated from its own existence.

2) al-Ittihayyah (the unitists): They believe that they have united with Allah and Allah has united with them. They liken Allah with fire and themselves with iron that lies in the fire from which it acquires its form and quality.

3) al-Huluyyah (the formists): Their belief is that Allah takes the form of those who claim to know Him and the perfect ones and their bodies are places of His stay. In this way, they are seemingly men but really Allah.

4) al-Wasiliyyah (the combiners): This sect considers itself to have combined with Allah. Their belief is that the laws of the Sharī'a are a means of development of the human personality and character and that when the human self combines with Allah, it no longer needs perfection or development. Consequently, for the Wasilis, worship and ritual become useless because they hold that when truth/reality is achieved, the Shari`a becomes irrelevant. Therefore, they can do anything, and they cannot be questioned.

5) az-Zarraqiyyah (the revelers): This sect regards vocal and instrumental music as worship; it earns the pleasures of this world through a show of asceticism and from door to door begging. They are ever engaged in relating concocted stories of miraculous performances of their leaders in order to impress the common people.

6) al-Ushshaqiyyah (the lovers): The theory of this sect is: Apparency is the means to reality, meaning that carnal love is the means to achieve the love of Allah. That is, in order to reach the stage of Allah's love, it is necessary to have love with a human beauty. But the love which they regard as love for Allah is just the product of mental disorder through which the lover inclines to one individual with all his attention. His final objective is to have access to the beloved one. This love can lead to the way of evil and vice, but it has no connection with the love of Allah.

A Persian couplet says: "The truth of the fact is that carnal desire is like a jinn, and a jinn cannot give you guidance."

7) at-Talqiniyyah (the encounterers): According to this "sect", the reading of religious sciences and books of scholarship is totally unlawful.

Instead, the status that is achieved by an hour of spiritual effort of the Sufis cannot be achieved even by seventy years of book reading.

According to Shi`a ulema', all these sects are on the wrong path and out of the fold of Islam. In this regard, numerous sayings of the Imams are related. In this sermon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has regarded the severance of Asim ibn Ziyad from this world as the mischief of Satan. He strongly dissuaded him from adopting that course. (For further study, see Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, al-Hajj Mirza Habibullah a-Khoei, Vol. 13, pp.132-417; Vol. 14, pp. 2-22).

Sermon 209

Someone[1] Asked Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) about Concocted Traditions and Contradictory Sayings of the Prophet (ص) Which Were Then in Circulation among the Public. The Imam Said the Following :

Certainly, what is current among the people is both right and wrong, true and false, repealing and repealed, general and particular, definite and indefinite, exact and surmised. Even during the Prophet's days, false sayings had been attributed to him, so much so that he had to say during his sermon that "Whoever attributes falsehoods to me makes his own abode in Hell." Those who relate traditions are no more than four categories:

[194]This person was Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilali, one of the narrators of traditions through Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

1. The Lying Hypocrites

The hypocrite is a person who makes a show of faith and adopts the appearance of a Muslim. He does not hesitate to sin, nor does he keep aloof from vice. He willfully attributes false things to the Messenger of Allah. If people knew that he was a hypocrite and a liar, they would not accept anything from him and would not consider what he says. Rather, they would say that he is the companion of the Prophet (ص), has met him, heard (his statements) and acquired knowledge from him. They, therefore, accept what he says. Allah, too, had warned you against the hypocrites and described them fully to you. They have continued after the Holy Prophet (ص). They gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell through falsehoods and slandering. So, the latter put them in high positions and made them officers over the heads of the people, letting them amass wealth. People are always with the rulers and after this world except those to whom Allah affords protection. This is the first of the four categories.

2. Those Who are Mistaken

Then there is the individual who heard (a saying) from the Holy Prophet (ص) but did not memorize it as it was, but surmised its gist. He does not lie willfully. Now, he carries the saying with him and relates it, depends upon it and claims that: "I heard it from the Messenger of Allah." If the Muslims come to know that he has committed a mistake in it, they will not accept it from him, and if he himself knows that he is wrong, he will give it up.

3. Those Who are Ignorant

The third man is one who heard the Prophet (ص) ordering to do something, and later the Prophet (ص) forbade people from doing it, but this man did not know it, or he heard the Prophet (ص) forbidding people from doing something and later he allowed it, but this man did not know it. In this case, he retained in his mind what had been repealed and did not retain the repealing tradition. If he knew that it had been repealed, he would reject it, or if the Muslims knew, when they heard it from him, that it had been repealed, they would reject it.

4. Those Who Accurately Memorize

The last, namely the fourth man, is whoever does not speak a lie against Allah or against His Prophet (ص). He hates falsehood out of fear for Allah and respect for the Messenger of Allah and does not commit mistakes, but retains (in his mind) exactly what he heard (from the Prophet (ص)) and he relates it as he heard it without adding anything or omitting anything. He heard the repealing tradition, he retained it and acted upon it and he heard the repealed tradition and rejected it. He also understands the particular and the general and he knows the definite and indefinite and gives everything its due status.

The sayings of the Prophet (ص) used to be of two types. One was particular and the other common. Sometimes a man would hear him but he would not know what Allah, the Glorified One, meant by it or what the Messenger of Allah meant by it. In this way the listener carries it and memorizes it without knowing its meaning and its real intention, or what was its reason. Among the companions of the Messenger of Allah all were not in the habit of putting him questions and ask him the meanings, indeed they always wished that some Bedouin or stranger might come and ask him (ع) so that they would also listen. Whenever any such thing came before me, I asked him about its meaning and preserved it. These are the reasons and grounds of differences among the people in their traditions.

In this sermon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has divided the traditionists into four categories:.

The first category is that of a man who concocts a tradition then attributes it to the Prophet (ص). Traditions were in fact falsified and attributed to him even during his holy life-time. This process continued with the result that numerous fabricated traditions came into existence. This is a fact which cannot be denied, but if anyone does deny it, his basis would not be knowledge, or sagacity by oratory, or argumentative necessity. Thus, once, “alamul-huda” (the ensign of guidance), namely Sayyid al-Murtada, had a chance to meet some Sunni ulema’ (scholars) with whom he made a debate. During that incident, Sayyid al-Murtada proved by citing historical facts that the traditions related about the merits of the “great companions” (or the “righteous caliphs”) were concocted and fabricated. On this, the (Sunni) ulema’ argued that it was impossible that someone should dare to speak a lie against the Prophet (ص) and make

up a tradition by himself then attribute it to the Prophet (ص). Sayyid al-Murthada said that there was a tradition of the Prophet (ص) that:

"Many false things will be attributed to me after my death; whoever speaks a lie against me will be preparing his own abode in Hell" (al-Bukhari, Vol. 1, p. 38; Vol. 2, p. 102; Vol. 4, p. 207; Vol. 8, p. 54; Muslim, Vol. 8, p. 229; Abu Dawud, Vol. 3, pp. 319-320; al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 4, p. 524; Vol. 5, pp. 35-36, 40, 199, 634; Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, pp. 13-15).

If you regard this tradition as true, then you should agree that false things have, indeed, been attributed to the Prophet (ص). But if you regard it as false, this would still prove our point. However, these were people whose hearts were full of hypocrisy and who used to make up traditions of their own in order to create mischief and dispersion in religion and to misguide the Muslims of weak convictions. Such fabricators kept thus fabricating "traditions" just as they used to do during the lifetime of the Prophet (ص) just as they remained busy in their activities of mischief and destruction in those days. They were not unmindful of altering the teachings of Islam and metamorphosing its saline features. Rather, in the days of the Prophet (ص), they were always afraid lest he should expose them and put them to shame. But after the demise of the Prophet (ص), their hypocritical activities increased, and they attributed false things to the Prophet (ص) without demur for their own personal ends. Those who heard them believed in them because of their status as companions of the Prophet (ص), thinking that whatever they said was correct and whatever they gave out was true. Afterwards, the belief that all the companions are correct put a stopper on their tongues, as a result of which they were taken to be above criticism, questioning, discussion and censure. Besides, their conspicuous performance had made them prominent in the eyes of the government. Also because of this, the government lacked the courage to speak against them. This is proven by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's words: "These people gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell, through falsehood and slandering. So, they put them in high positions and made them officers over the heads of the people."

Along with the destruction of Islam, the hypocrites also aimed at amassing wealth. They were doing so claiming to be Muslims because of which they did not want to remove the veil of Islam (from their faces) and to come out openly. They wanted to continue their Satanic activities under

the garb of Islam, engaging themselves in its basic destruction, spreading division and dissension by concocting false "traditions". In this regard, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written the following: "When they were left free, they, too, left many things. When people remained silent about them, they also remained silent about Islam. But they continued their underground activities such as the fabrication of falsehoods to which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has alluded. Many untrue matters had been mixed with the traditions by the same group of people of wrong beliefs who aimed at misguidance and the distortion of views and beliefs, while some of them also aimed at extolling some particular party with whom they had other worldly aims as well."

On the expiration of this period, when Mu`awiyah took over the leadership of the religion and occupied the throne of temporal authority, he opened an official department for the fabrication of "traditions", ordering his officers to fabricate and popularize traditions in disparagement of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (the Household of the Holy Prophet [ص]), extol Othman and the Umayyads, and announcing generous rewards and land grants for this work. Consequently, a lot of traditions about self-made distinctions gained entry in the books of traditions. Thus, Abul-Hassan al-Mada'ini has written in his book Kitab al-ahadith which Ibn Abul-Hadid has quoted as follows: "Mu`awiyah wrote to his officers that they should take special care of those who were followers of Othman, his well-wishers and lovers and to award high status, precedence and honor to those who related traditions about his merits and distinctions,and to convey to him whatever is thus related by any person, along with his name, the name of his father and the name of his tribe. They did accordingly and heaped up traditions about the merits and distinctions of Othman because Mu`awiyah used to award them rewards, clothes, grants and lands."

When the fabricated traditions about the merits of Othman had been disseminated throughout the Islamic lands, with the idea that the status of the earlier Caliphs should not remain low, Mu`awiyah wrote the following to his officers: "As soon as you receive this order of mine, you should call upon the people to make up traditions about the distinctions of the companions and other caliphs, too. Make sure that if any Muslim relates any tradition in praise of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), you should make up a similar tradition about the companions to contradict it because this gives me great pleasure and cools my eyes and it weakens the status of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib and his party and is more severe to them than the merits and distinctions of Othman. When his letters were read to the

people, a large number of such traditions were related extolling the companions that are all fabricated with no truth at all" (Sharh Nahjul-Balāgha, Vol. 11, pp. 43-47).

In this regard, "Abu Abdillah", namely Ibrahīm ibn Muhammad ibn Arafah, famous as Niftawayh (244/858 - 323/935), was one of the prominent scholars and traditionists who have written about this subject. Ibn Abul-Hadid has quoted him saying, "Most false traditions about the merits of the companions were fabricated during the days of Mu`awiyah in order to gain status in his audience because his view was that in this way he could disgrace Banu Hashim and render their status low" (Ibid.).

After that, fabrication of traditions became a good paying job for many. The seekers of this world made it a means of securing status with their contemporary kings and nobles and to amass wealth. For example, Ghiyath ibn Ibrahim an-Nakh`i (2nd cent. A.H.) fabricated a tradition about the flight of pigeons in order to please al-Mahdi ibn al-Mansur (the Abbasid caliph) and to secure a status near to him (Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 12, pp. 323-327; Mizan al-I'tidal, Vol. 3, pp.337-338; Lisan al-Mizan, Vol. 4, p.422). Abu Sa'id al-Mada'ini and others made it a means of livelihood. The maximum limit was reached when al-Karramiyya and some of the al-Mutasawwifah gave the ruling that the fabrication of traditions for the prevention of sin or for persuasion towards obedience was lawful. Consequently, with regard to persuading and dissuading, traditions were fabricated quite freely, and this was not regarded as being against the religious law or in contradiction with morality. Rather, this work was generally done by those who bore the appearance of asceticism or fear of Allah and who passed their nights in praying and days in filling their books with false traditions. An idea about the number of these fabricated traditions can be formulated from the fact that out of six hundred thousand traditions, al-Bukhari selected only two thousand and seven hundred and sixty-one traditions (Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 2, p.8; Al-Irshad as-Sari, Vol. 1, p.28; Sifatul-Safwah, Vol. 4, p. 143). Muslim regarded for selection in his book only four thousand out of three hundred thousand traditions (Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 13, p. 101; Al-Muntzam, Vol. 5, p.32; Tabaqat al-Huffaz, Vol. 2, pp. 151, 157; Wafiyyat al-A'yan, Vol. 5, p. 194). Abu Dawud took four thousand and eight hundred out of five hundred thousand (Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 9, p. 57; Tabaqat al-Huffaz, Vol. 2, p. 154; Al-Muntazam, Vol. 5, p. 97; Wafiyyat al-A'yan, Vol. 2, p. 404) and Ahmed ibn Hanbal took thirty thousand out of nearly one million traditions (Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 4, p. 419-420; Tabaqat al-Huffaz, Vol. 2, p. 17; Wafiyyat al-A'yan, Vol. 1, p. 64; Tahthib al-Tahthib, Vol. 1, p. 74). But when this selection is studied, some traditions which come across

can, in no circumstances, be attributed to the Prophet (ص). The result is that a group of considerable number has cropped up among Muslims who, in view of these so-called authoritative collections and true traditions, completely reject the evidentiary value of the traditions, (For further reference see al-Ghadīr, Vol. 5, pp. 208-378).

The second category of narrators of traditions are those who, without appreciating the occasion or context, related whatever they could recollect, right or wrong. Thus, in al-Bukhari (Vol. 2, pp. 100-102; Vol. 5, p. 98); Muslim (Vol. 3, pp. 41-45); al-Tirmidhi (Vol. 3, pp. 327-329); al-Nisa'i (Vol. 4, p. 18); Ibn Majah (Vol. 1, pp. 508-509); Malik ibn Anas (Al-Muwatta', Vol. 1, p. 234); ash-Shafi'i (Ikhtilaful-Hadith, on the side lines of Al-Umm, Vol. 7, p. 266); Abu Dawud (Vol. 3, p. 194); Ahmed ibn Hanbal (Vol. 1, pp. 41, 42) and al-Baqyhaqi (Vol. 4, pp. 72-74) in the chapter entitled 'weeping over the dead' it is stated that when `Umar was wounded Suhayb came weeping to him, then Umar said the following: "O Suhayb! If you weep mourn me, the Prophet (ص) had said that the dead person is punished if his people mourn him."

After the death of Umar, this dialogue was mentioned to Aisha. She said the following: "May Allah have mercy on `Umar! The Messenger of Allah did not say that mourning relatives brings about a punishment on the dead, but he said that the punishment of an unbeliever increases if people mourn him." After this, Aisha said that according to the Holy Quran, nobody had to bear the burden of another; so, how could the burden of those who weep be placed on the dead? After this, the following verse was quoted by Aisha: "No bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another" (Holy Quran, 6: 164; 17: 15; 35: 18; 39: 7; 53: 38).

The wife of the Holy Prophet (ص), Aisha, relates that once the Prophet (ص) passed by a Jewish woman on account of whose death her people were weeping. The Prophet (ص) then remarked, "Her people are weeping over her, but she is undergoing punishment in the grave."

The third category of the narrators of traditions is that of those who heard some repealed traditions from the Prophet (ص) but could not get any change to hear the repealing traditions which he could relate to others. An example of a repealing tradition is the statement of the Prophet (ص) which also contains a reference to the repealed tradition, namely: "I had prohibited you from visiting graves, but now you can visit them" (Muslim, Vol. 3, p. 65; al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 3, p. 370; Abu Dawud, Vol. 3,

pp. 218, 332; al-Nisa'i, Vol. 4, p. 89; Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, pp. 500-501; Malik ibn Anas, Vol. 2, p. 485; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, pp. 145,452; Vol. 3, pp. 38, 63, 66, 237, 350; Vol. 5, pp. 350, 355, 356, 357, 359, 361; al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 1, pp. 374-376, and al-Bayhaqi, Vol. 4, pp. 76-77). Herein, the permission to visit graves has repealed the previous restriction. Now, those who heard only the repealed tradition continued acting according to it.

The fourth category of narrators of traditions is that of those who were fully aware of the principles of justice, possessed intelligence and sagacity, knew the occasion when a tradition was first uttered (by the Prophet [ص]) and were also acquainted with the repealing and the repealed traditions, the particular and the general, and the temporary and the permanent. They avoided falsehood and fabrication. Whatever they heard remained preserved in their memory, and they conveyed it with exactness to others. It is they whose traditions are the precious wealth of Islam, free from fraud and counterfeit, worthy of being trusted and acted upon. That collection of traditions, which has been conveyed through trustworthy bosoms like that of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and has remained free from cutting, curtailing, alteration, present Islam in its true form. The status of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in Islamic knowledge has been most certainly proved through traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet (ص) such as:.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Jabir ibn `Abdullah, Ibn `Abbas and Abdullah ibn `Umar have narrated from the Holy Prophet (ص) that he said the following: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. Whoever wants to acquire (my) knowledge should come through its gate (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 126-127; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1102; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 4, p. 22; Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 2, p. 377; Vol. 4, p. 348; Vol. 7, p. 172; Vol. 11, pp. 48-50; Tadhkirah al-Huffaz, Vol. 4, p. 28; Majma' al-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, p. 114; Tahthib al-Tahthib, Vol. 6, p. 320; Vol. 7, p. 337; Lisan al-Mizan, Vol. 2, pp. 122-123; Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 170; Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 6, pp. 152, 156, 401; `Umdat al-Qari, Vol. 7, p. 631; Sharh al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya, Vol. 3, p. 143).

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and ibn Abbas have also cited the Holy Prophet (ص) saying, "I am the store-house of wisdom and Ali is its door. Whoever wants to acquire wisdom should come through its door" (Hilyat al-Awliya', Vol. 1, p. 64; Masabih as-Sunna, Vol. 2, p. 275;

Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 11, p. 204; Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 6, p. 401; Al-Riyad al-Nadara, Vol. 12, p. 193).

If only people could take the Prophet's blessings through these sources of knowledge! But it is a tragic chapter of history that although traditions are accepted through the Kharijites and enemies of the Prophet's family, whenever the series of relaters includes the name of any individual from among the Prophet's family, there is hesitation in accepting that tradition...!

Sermon 210

The Greatness of Allah and the Creation of the Universe

It is through the strength of Allah's Greatness and Subtle Power of innovation that He made solid dry earth out of the water of the fathomless, compact and dashing ocean. Then He made from it layers and separated them into seven skies they had been joined together. So, they became stationary at His command, stopping at the limit fixed by Him. He made the earth that is born deep blue, surrounded with water which is obedient to His command and to His awe while its flow has stopped due to fear of Him.

He also created high hills, rocks and lofty mountains. He put them in their positions and made them remain stationary. Their peaks stretched into the air while their roots remained in the water. In this way, He realized the mountains above the plains and fixed their foundations in the vast expanse wherever they stood. He made their peaks high and their mass lofty. He made them like pillars for the earth in which He fixed them like pegs. Consequently, the earth became stationary lest it should bend with its inhabitants, or sink inwards with its burden, or shift from its positions.

Therefore, glorified is Whoever stopped it after the flowing of its waters and solidified it after the watery state of its sides. In this way He made it a cradle for His creatures and spread it for them in the form of a floor over the deep ocean which is stationary and does not move; it is fixed and does not flow. Severe winds move it here and there and clouds draw up water from it.

"Verily in this there is a lesson to him who fears (Allah) Holy Quran, 79: 26)

Sermon 211

About Those Who Give up Supporting Right

O Lord! Whoever listens to our utterance, which is just and which seeks the prosperity of religion and the worldly life, and who does not seek mischief, but rejects it after listening, then he certainly turns away from Your support and desists from strengthening Your religion. We implore You to be the witness over him, and You are the greatest of all witnesses, and we make all those who inhabit Your earth and skies witness over him. Thereafter, You alone can make us needless of his support and question him about his sin.

Sermon 212

Sublimity of Allah, Praising the Prophet (ص)

Praise be to Allah Who is above all similarity to the creatures, is above the words of describers. He displays the wonders of His management for the onlookers, is hidden from the imagination of thinkers by virtue of the greatness of His glory, has knowledge without acquiring it, adding to it or drawing it (from someone) and Who is the One Who ordains all matters without reflecting or thinking. He is such that gloom does not concern Him, nor does He seek light from brightness. Night does not overtake Him, nor does the day pass over Him (so as to affect Him in any manner). His comprehension (of things) is not through eyes, and His knowledge is not dependent on being informed.

Part of the Same Sermon about the Prophet (ص)

Allah deputed the Prophet (ص) with light and accorded him the highest precedence in selection. Through him, Allah united those who were divided, overpowered the powerful, overcame difficulties and leveled rugged ground, thus removing misguidance right and left.

Sermon 213

The Prophet's Nobility of Descent

I testify that He is just and implements justice. He is the arbiter Who decides (between right and wrong). I also testify that Muhammad

(ص) is His slave, Messenger and the Chief of His creatures. When Allah divided the line of descent, He placed his in the very best place. Therefore, no evil-doer ever shared with him, nor was any vicious person his partner.

Beware! Surely Allāh, the Glorified One, has provided for virtue those who are suited for it, for truth pillars (that support it), and for obedience protection (against deviation). In every matter of obedience, you would find Allah, the Glorified One, succor that would speak through tongues and accords firmness to the hearts. It has sufficiency for those who seek sufficiency, a cure for those who seek a cure.

Characteristics of the virtuous whose guidance must be emulated

Be informed that, certainly, those servants of Allah Who preserve His knowledge offer protection to those things which He desires to be protected and make His springs flow (for the benefit of others). They contact each other with friendliness and meet each other with affection. They drink water from cups that quench the thirst and return from the watering places fully satiated. Misgiving does not affect them; backbiting does not gain ground with them. In this way Allah has tied their nature with good manners. Because of this, they love and meet each other. They have become superior like seeds which are selected by taking some and throwing away others. This selection has distinguished them, and the process of choosing has purified them.

Therefore, man should secure honor by adopting these qualities. He should fear the day of Doom before it arrives; he should appreciate the shortness of his life and the shortness of his sojourn in the place of stay which has only to last for his journey to the next abode. He should, therefore, do something for his change over and for the known stages of his departure. Blessed be whoever possesses a virtuous heart, who obeys one who guides him, desists from him who takes to ruin, catches the path of safety with the help of him who provides light (of guidance), obeying the leader who commands him, hastens towards guidance before its doors are closed, opens the door of repentance and removes the (stain of) sins. He has certainly been put on the right path and guided towards the straight road.

Sermon 214

A Prayer Which Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Often Recited

Praise be to Allah Who made me such that I have not died nor am I sick, nor have my veins been infected with disease, nor have I been hauled up for my evil deeds, nor am I without progeny, nor have I forsaken my religion, nor do I disbelieve in my Lord, nor do I feel estranged with my faith, nor is my intelligence affected, nor have I been punished with the punishment of peoples before me. I am a slave in Your possession, Lord, yet I have been guilty of excesses regarding my own soul. You have exhausted Your pleas in my regard and I have no plea (before You). I have no power to take except what You give me, and I cannot evade except what You save me from.

O Lord! I seek Your protection from becoming destitute despite Your riches, from being misguided despite Your guidance, from being assaulted in Your realm and from being humiliated while authority rests with You.

O Lord! Let my soul be the first of the good things that You take from me and the first trust out of Your favors held in trust with me.

O Lord! We seek Your protection against turning away from Your command or rebellioning against Your religion, or being led away by our desires instead of by guidance that comes from You.

Sermon 215

Delivered at the Battle of Siffin Mutual Rights of the Ruler and the Ruled

By placing me over your affairs, Allah, the Glorified One, has created my right over you and you, too, have a right over me like mine over you, a right is very vast in description but very narrow in equity. It does not accrue to any person unless it accrues against him also, and right does not accrue against a person unless it also accrues in his favor. If there is any right, which is only in favor of a person with no (corresponding) right accruing against him, it is solely for Allah, the Glorified One, not for His creatures by virtue of His might over His creatures, and by virtue of the justice permeating all His decrees. Of course, He, the Glorified One, has created His right over creatures to

worship Him and has laid upon Himself (the obligation of) their reward equal to several times the recompense as a mark of His bounty and the generosity that He is capable of.

Then, from His rights, He, the Glorified One, created certain rights for certain people against others. He made them so in order to equate one with another. Some of these rights produce other rights. Some rights are such that they do not accrue except with others. The greatest of these rights is that Allah, the Glorified One, has made obligatory the right of the ruler over the ruled, and the right of the ruled over the ruler. This is an obligation which Allah, the Glorified One, has placed on each other. He has made it the basis of their (mutual) affection and an honor for their religion. Consequently, the ruled cannot prosper unless the rulers are sound, while the rulers cannot be sound unless the ruled are steadfast.

If the ruled fulfil the rights of the ruler and the ruler fulfills their rights, then right attains the status of honor among them, the ways of religion become established, the signs of justice become fixed and the Sunnah gains currency.

In this way, time would improve, the continuance of government would be expected and the aims of the enemies would be frustrated. But if the ruled gain sway over the ruler, or if the ruler oppresses the ruled, then differences crop up in every word, signs of oppression appear, mischief creeps into the creed and the ways of the Sunnah are forsaken. Then desires are acted upon, the commands (of religion) are discarded, diseases of the spirit become numerous and there is no hesitation in disregarding even great rights, nor in committing big wrongdoings. In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honored, and in this there are serious chastisements from Allāh, the Glorified One, on the people.

You should, therefore, counsel each other (for the fulfillment of your obligations) and cooperate with each other. However extremely eager a person may be to secure the pleasure of Allah, and however fully he strives for it, he cannot totally discharge (his obligation for) obedience to Allah, the Glorified One, as is really due to Him. It is an obligatory right of Allah over the people that they should advise each other to the best of their ability and cooperate with each other for the establishment of the truth among them. Nobody, however great his status in the matter of the truth, and however advanced his distinction in religion may be, is above cooperation with regard to the obligations placed on him by Allah. Again, no man, however small he may be regarded by others and however

humble he may appear before their eyes, is too low to cooperate or to be afforded cooperation in this matter.

One of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's companions replied to him with a long speech of his own wherein he praised him much and referred to his listening to him and obeying him, whereas Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

If a man in his mind regards Allah's glory as being high and believes in his heart that Allah's status is sublime, then it is his right that on account of the greatness of these things, he should regard all other things as minor. Among such persons he on whom Allah's bounty is great and Allah's favors are kind has a greater obligation because Allah's bounty over any person does not increase without a corresponding increase in Allah's right over him.

In the view of virtuous people, the worst status of rulers is that it may be thought about them that they love glory and their affairs may be taken to be based on pride. I would really hate that it may cross your mind that I love high praises or hear eulogies. By the grace of Allah, I am not like this. Even if I had loved to be mentioned like this, I would have given it up in submissiveness before Allah, the Glorified One, rather than accept greatness and sublimity to which He is more entitled. Generally, people feel pleased at praise after good performances. But do not mention to me handsome praise for the obligations which I have discharged towards Allah and towards you because of (my) fear about those obligations which I have not discharged and for issuing injunctions which could not be avoided. Do not address me in the manner in which despots are addressed.

Do not shun me as the people of passion are (to be) shunned. Do not meet me with flattery, and do not think that I shall take it ill if a true thing is said to me because the person who feels disgusted when he hears the truth, or a just matter is placed before him, would find it more difficult to act upon them. Therefore, do not abstain from saying the truth or pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself to be above erring. I do not escape erring in my actions except that Allah helps me (in avoiding errors) in matters in which He is more powerful than I. Certainly, I and you are slaves owned by Allah, besides Whom there is no other Lord. He owns our souls which we do not own. He took us from where we were towards the means of our prosperity. He turned our straying into guidance and gave us intelligence after blindness.

That the innocence of angels is different from the innocence of man needs no detailed explanation. The innocence of angels means that they do not possess the motive to sin, but the innocence of man means that, although he has human frailties and passions, he possesses the power to resist them and is not over-powered by them so as to commit sins. This very ability is called innocence and it prevents the rising up of personal passions and impulses. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's saying that he does not regard himself as being above erring refers to those human dictates and passions. His saying that Allah helps him in avoiding errors refers to his being free of them. The same tone is found in the Holy Quran in the Sura about Prophet Yusuf thus: "I do not excuse myself; verily (one's) self [nafs] is bent on bidding (him/her to commit) evil, except such as my Lord has had mercy on; verily my Lord is oft-Forgiving, all-Merciful" (Holy Quran 12: 53).

Just as in this verse, due to the existence of exceptions, the first part of the Imam's statement cannot be used to argue against his being free of having committed a sin. Similarly, due to the existence of the exception that Allah helps him to avoid errors, the first part of the statement by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib cannot be used to argue against his being free of having committed any sin; otherwise, the notion of the Prophet's infallibility, too, would have to be rejected. In the same way, the last sentence of this sermon should not be taken to mean that before the proclamation of Prophethood, he had been under the influence of pre-Islamic beliefs, and that just as others had been unbelievers, he, too, might have been in darkness and misguidance. This is so because since his birth, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was brought up by the Prophet (ص) because of what the effect of such upbringing had permeated him. It cannot, therefore, be conceived that whoever had since infancy trodden in the footprints of the Prophet (ص) would deviate from the path of guidance even for one moment. Thus, al-Mas`udi has written the following: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) never believed in any god than Allah so that there could be a question about his acceptance of Islam [i.e. he was always Muslim]. He rather followed the Prophet (ص) in all his actions and (virtually) imitated him. In this very state he attained the most" (Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. 2, p. 3).

Here, reference to those whom Allah led from darkness into guidance implies the individuals whom Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was addressing. Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following in this regard: "The reference here is not to his own self because he had never been an unbeliever so as to have accepted Islam after that. But with these words,

he is referring to those group of people whom he was addressing" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 11, p. 108).

Sermon 216

Excesses of the Quraishi Tribesmen

O Lord! I beseech You to take revenge on the tribesmen of Quraish and on those who are assisting them, for they have cut asunder my kinship and over-turned my cup. They have joined together to contest a right to which I was entitled more than anyone else. They said to me: "If you get your right, that would be just, but if you are denied the right, that, too, would be just. Endure it with sadness or kill yourself in grief." I looked around but found no one to shield me, protect me or help me except the members of my family. I refrained from flinging them into death and, therefore, closed my eyes despite the dust, kept swallowing saliva despite (the suffocation of) grief and endured the pangs of anger although they were more bitter than colocynth and more grievous than the stabs of knives.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "This utterance of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has already appeared in an earlier Sermon (No. 171), but I have repeated it here because of the difference of versions."

Part of the Same Sermon about Those Who Went to Basra to Fight Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع)

They marched on my officers and the custodians of the public treasury, which is still under my control, and on the people of a metropolis all of whom were obedient to me and were allied to me. They created division among them, instigated their party against me and attacked my followers. They killed a group of them by treachery, while another group took up swords against them and fought with the swords till they met Allah as adherents to the truth.

Sermon 217

When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Passed by the Corpses of Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah and `Abd Ar-rahman Ibn Attab Ibn Asid, Who Were Both Killed in the Battle of Jamal, He Said the Following:.

Abu Muhammad (Talhah) lies here away from his own place. By Allah, I did not like that the tribesmen of Quraish should lie killed under the stars. I have avenged myself, together with the descendants of `Abd Manaf, but the chief persons of Banu Jumah[195] have slipped away from my grip. They had stretched their necks towards a matter for which they were not suited and, therefore, their necks were broken before they reached their goal.

Sermon 218

Qualities of the God-Fearing and the Pious

He (the believer) kept his mind alive and killed (the desires of) his heart till his body became thin, his bulk turned light and a glory of extreme brightness shone for him. It lighted the way for him and took him on the (right) path. Different doors led him to the door of safety and the place of (his permanent) stay. His feet, balancing his body, became fixed in the status of safety and comfort because he kept his heart (in good deeds) and pleased his Lord.

Sermon 219

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Recited the Verse Saying, "Engage (Your) Vying in Exuberance until You Come to the Graves" (Holy Quran, 102: 1-2)[1] Then Said the Following :

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[195]During the Battle of Jamal, a group of Banu Jumah was on the side of Aisha, yet the chief men of this group fled away from the battlefield. Some of them were: Abdullah at-Tawil ibn Safwan, Yahya ibn Hakim, Amir ibn Mas`ud and Ayyub ibn Habib. From this group (Banu Jumah), only two men were killed.

[196]1. The genesis of the revelation of this verse is that the tribes of Banu Abd Manaf and Banu Sahm began to boast to each other about the abundance of their wealth and the number of their tribesmen. In order to prove that they had a greater number, each began to include their [in the tally] dead as well, whereupon this verse was revealed to the effect that abundance of riches and a majority in numbers has made you some people forgetful, so much so that they count the dead also with the living. This verse is also taken to mean that abundance of riches and progeny has made some people oblivious [of their religious obligations] till they reached their graves. But the utterance of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) supports the first meaning.

How distant (from achievement) is their aim, how neglectful these visitors are and how difficult the affair is! They have not taken lessons from things which are full of lessons, but they took them from far off places. Do they boast on the dead bodies of their forefathers, or do they regard the number of dead persons as a ground for boasting about their number?! They want to revive the bodies that have become lifeless and the movements that have ceased. They are more entitled to be a source of admonishment than a source of pride and boasting. They are more suitable for being a source of humility than of honor.

They looked at them with weak-sighted eyes, descending into the hollow of ignorance. If they had asked about them from the dilapidated houses and empty courtyards, they would have said that they went into earth in the state of misguidance, and you, too, are heading ignorantly towards them. You trample their skulls, raise constructions on their corpses, graze what they have left and live in houses which they have vacated. The days (that lie) between them and you are also bemoaning you and reciting eulogies over you.

They are your fore-runners in reaching the goal. They have arrived at the watering places before you. They had positions of honor and plenty of pride. They were rulers and holders of positions. Now they have gone into the interstice where earth covers them from above and is eating their flesh and drinking their blood. They lie in the hollows of their graves lifeless, growing no more, hidden, not to be found. The approach of dangers does not frighten them; the adversity of circumstances does not grieve them. They do not mind earthquakes, nor do they heed thunder. They are gone and not expected back. They are existent but unseen. They were united but are now dispersed. They were together and are now separated.

Their records are unknown and their houses are silent, not because of length of time or distance of place, but because they have been made to drink the cup (of death) which has changed their speech into dumbness, their hearing into deafness and their movements into stillness. It seems as if they are fallen in slumber. They are neighbors not feeling affection for each other, friends who do not meet each other. The bonds of their knowing each other have been worn out; the regards of their friendship have been cut asunder. Everyone of them is, therefore, alone although they are a group; they are strangers though friends. They are unaware of morning after a night and of evening after a day. The night or

the day, when they departed, has become ever existent for them.[197] Or a night that would come without a day. They found the dangers of their place of stay more serious than they had feared. They witnessed that its signs were greater than they had guessed. The two objectives (namely Paradise and Hell) have been stretched for them up to a point beyond the reach of either fear or hope. Had they been able to speak, they would have become too dumb to describe what they witnessed or saw.

Even though their traces have been wiped out and their news has stopped, eyes are capable of drawing a lesson, as they looked at them, intelligent ears heard them, and they spoke without uttering words. So, they said that handsome faces have been destroyed and delicate bodies have been smeared by the earth. We have put on a worn-out shroud. The narrowness of the grave has over-whelmed us and strangeness has spread among us. Our silent abodes have been ruined. The beauty of our bodies has disappeared. Our known features have become hateful. Our stay in the places of strangeness has become long. We do not get relief from pain nor widening from narrowness.

Now, if you portray them in your mind, or if the curtains concealing them are removed for you, in such a state, when their ears have lost their power, turning deaf, their eyes have been filled with dust, sinking down, their tongues which were very active have been cut into pieces, their hearts which were ever wakeful have become motionless in their chests, in every limb of theirs a peculiar decay has taken place which has deformed it and paved the way for calamity towards it..., all these lie powerless, with no hand to help them, no heart to grieve over them, it is then that you would certainly realize the grief of their hearts and the dirt of their eyes.

Every trouble of theirs is such that its condition does not change and the distress does not clear away. How many a prestigious body and amazing beauty which earth has swallowed, although when in the world he enjoyed abundant pleasures and was nurtured in honor? He clung to enjoyments (even) in the hour of grief. If distress befell him, he would

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[197]This means that for whoever dies in the day, it is always day, whereas for whoever dies in the night, the darkness of night never dispels because they are at a place where there is no turning of the moon and the sun and no rotation of the nights and the days. The same meaning has been expressed by a poet like this:

There is sure to be a day without a night,

seek refuge in consolation through the pleasures of life, playing and being indulged in games. He was laughing at the world while the world was laughing at him because of a life full of forgetfulness. Then time trampled him like thorns, the days weakened his energy and death began to look at him from near. Then he was overtaken by a grief which he had never felt; ailments appeared in place of the health which he previously used to enjoy.

He then turned to that with which the physician had made him familiar, namely suppressing the hot (diseases) with cold (medicines) and curing the cold with hot doses. But the cold things did nothing save aggravate the hot ailments, while the hot ones did nothing except to increase the coldness. Nor did he acquire temperateness in his constitution. Rather, every ailment of his increased till his physicians became helpless, his attendants grew loathsome and his own people felt disgusted from describing his disease, avoided answering those who inquired about him and quarreled in front of him about the serious news which they were concealing from him. Thus, someone would say that his condition is what it is and would console them with hopes of his recovery, while another would advocate patience on missing him, recalling to them the calamities that had befallen the earlier generations.

In this state, when he was getting ready to depart from the world and leave his beloved ones, such a serious choking overtook him that his senses became bewildered and the dampness of his tongue dried up. Now, there was many an important question whose reply he knew about but he could not utter and many a voice that was painful for his heart that he heard but remained (unmoved), as though he was deaf to the voice of either, an elder whom he used to respect, or a youth whom he used to caress. The pangs of death are too hideous to be covered by description or be appreciated by the hearts of the people in this world.

Sermon 220

Delivered after reciting this verse: "...therein are men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and are constantly praying and paying the poor-rate declare glory to Him in the mornings and the evenings; they fear the Day when the hearts and eyes shall writhe in anguish" (Holy Quran, 24: 36-37) ..

Certainly, Allah, the Glorified One, the Sublime, has made His remembrance the light for the hearts which hear, with its help, despite deafness, see with its help despite blindness and become submissive with its help despite unruliness.

In all the periods when there were no prophets, there have been persons with whom Allah, precious are His bounties, whispered through their wits and spoke through their minds. With the help of the bright awakening of their ears, eyes and hearts did they keep reminding others of the remembrance of the Days of Allah, making others fear Him with piety; they were like guide posts in the wildernesses. Whoever adopts the middle way, they praise his ways and give him the tidings of deliverance. But whoever goes right and left, they vilify his ways and frighten him with ruin. In this way, they served as lamps in the darkness and guides through these doubts.

There are some people who are devoted to the remembrance (of Allah). They have adopted it in place of worldly matters so that commerce or trade does not turn them away from it. They pass their life in it. They speak into the ears of neglectful persons, warning against matters regarded as unlawful by Allah, ordering them to practice justice while they themselves keep practicing it. They keep other away from what is unlawful while they themselves refrain from it. It is as though they have finished the journey of this world towards the next and have beheld what lies beyond it. Consequently, they have become acquainted with all that befell them in the interstice during their long stay the rein and the Day of Judgement fulfills its promises for them. Therefore, they removed the curtain from these things for the people of the world, till it was as though they were seeing what people did not see and hearing what people did not hear.

If you picture them in your mind in their admirable positions and well-known sittings, when they have opened the records of their actions and are prepared to render an account of themselves with regard to the small as well as the big things they were ordered to do but failed to do, or were ordered to refrain from but they indulged therein, so they realized the weight of their burden (of bad deeds) on their backs and felt too weak to bear them. Then they wept bitterly and spoke to each other while still crying and beseeching Allah in repentance and acknowledgment (of their shortcomings)..., you would find them to be symbols of guidance and lamps in the darkness. Angels will be surrounding them, peace will be descending upon them, the gates of heaven will be opened for them, and positions of honor will be assigned to them in the place of which Allah

had informed them. Therefore, He has appreciated their actions and praised their status. They call Him and breathe in the air of forgiveness. They are ever needy of His bounty. They remain humble before His greatness, the length of their grief has pained their hearts and prolonging their grief. They knock at every door of inclination towards Allah. They ask the One Whom generosity does not impoverish and from Whom those who approach Him do not get disappointed.

Therefore, take account of yourself for your own sake because the account of others will be taken by One other than you.

Sermon 221

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) recited this verse: "O you man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the most Gracious One?" (Holy Quran, 82: 6). Then he said the following :.

The addressee (in this verse) has no argument; his excuse is most deceptive. He is resigning himself to ignorance.

O man! What has emboldened you to (commit) sins? What had deceived you about your Lord, and what has made you satisfied with the destruction of your own soul? Is there no cure for your ailment or no awakening from your sleep? Do you not have pity on yourself as you have on others? Generally, when you see anyone exposed to the heat of the sun, you cover him with a shade. Or if you see anyone afflicted with grief that pains his body, you weep out of pity for him. What has then made you patient over your own disease? What has made you insistent on your own afflictions, and what has consoled you from weeping over yourself although your life is the most precious of all lives to you? Why does not the fear of an ailment that may befall you in the night keep you awake although you lie on the way to Allah's wrath due to your sins?

You should cure the disease of languor in your heart with determination and the sleep of neglectfulness in your eyes with wakefulness. Be obedient to Allah and love His remembrance. Picture yourself running away while He is approaching you. He is calling you to His forgiveness and concealing your faults with His kindness, while you are fleeing away from Him, seeking others. Certainly, Great is Allah the powerful Who is so generous, and how humble and weak you are yet still so bold to commit disobedience to Him although you live in His protection and undergo changes of life in the expanse of His kindness. He

does not exclude you from His kindness and does not remove you from His protection. In fact, you have not been without His kindness even for one single moment, whether it be a favor that He conferred upon you, or a sin of yours that He concealed, or a calamity that He has warded off from you. What is your idea about Him if you had obeyed Him? By Allah, if this had been the case with two persons equal in power and matching in might (one being inattentive and the other showering favors upon you), you would then have been the first to indict yourself of having a bad conduct and committing evil deeds.

I truthfully say that the world has not deceived you but you have had yourself deceived by it. The world opened to you the curtains and divulged to you (everything) equally. And in all that, it forewarned you about the troubles befalling your bodies and the decay in your power. It has been too true and faithful in promise and did not speak a lie to you or deceive you. There are many who advise you about it but they are blamed, and they speak the truth about it but they are opposed. If you understand the world by means of dilapidated and far-reaching power of drawing lessons, you would find it like one who is kind to you and cautious about you. It is good abode for whoever does not like it as an abode, a good place of stay for whoever does not regard it a permanent home for stay.

Only those who run away from this world today will tomorrow be regarded as virtuous. When an earthquake occurs, the Day of Resurrection approaches with all its severity, people of every worshiping place cling to it, while all the devotees cling to the objective of their devotion as all followers cling to their leaders. On that Day, even the act of one looking at the sky [wondering about what it contains and about the One Who created everything] or that of the sound of a footstep on the ground [of one who goes to perform a good deed] will be fully rewarded through His Justice and Equity. On that Day, many an argument will prove void and a contention for excuses will stand rejected.

You, therefore, should now adopt for yourselves the course with which your excuse may be sound and your plea may be heard. Take from the transient things of this world that which will stay for you (in the next world). Provide for your journey. Keep your gaze on the brightness of deliverance, and prepare the saddles (for setting off).

Sermon 222

About Keeping Aloof from Oppression and Misappropriation. Aqil's Condition of Poverty and Destitution

By Allah, I would rather remain all night long wake on the as-sa'dan thorns (a plant having sharp prickles), or be driven in chains as a prisoner, than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Day of Judgement having oppressed anyone or usurped anything of the world's wealth. How can I oppress anyone for a world that is fast moving towards destruction, then I shall remain in the earth for a long time?

By Allah, I certainly saw (my brother) Aqil fallen a prey to destitution. He asked me for one saa' (about three kilograms' weight) of wheat, and I also saw his children with dishevelled hair and a dusty countenance due to starvation, as though their faces had been blackened by indigo. He came to me several times and repeated his request to me again and again. I heard him and he thought I would sell my faith to him and follow his path, leaving my own. Then I heated a piece of iron and took it near his body so that he might learn a lesson from it. He cried as a person in protracted illness the cries of pain, and he was about to get burnt by its branding. Then I said to him, "May mourning women mourn you, O Aqil! Do you cry on account of this (heated) iron which has been made by a man for sport, while you are driving me towards the Fire which Allah, the Powerful, has prepared as a sign of His wrath? Should you cry from pain, but I should not cry from its flame?!"

A more strange incident than this is that of a man[198] who came to us in the night with a closed flask full of honey paste, but I disliked it as though it was the saliva or vomit of a serpent. I asked him whether it was a reward, or zakat (poor-tax), or charity, for we, members of the Prophet's family (ع) are forbidden from receiving them. "Childless women may mourn you! Have you come to deviate me from the religion of Allah, or are you mad, or have you been overpowered by some jinn, or are you speaking senselessly?!"

By Allah, even if I were to be given all the domains of the seven heavens with all that exists under the skies in order to disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would never do it. For me, your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is

[198]This is a reference to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays.

chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last? We seek the protection of Allah from the slip of wisdom, from the evils of falling into error, and from Him do we seek succor.

Sermon 223

Supplication

O Lord! Preserve (the grace of) my face with easiness of life and do not disgrace my countenance with destitution lest I should have to beg a livelihood from those who beg from You, try to seek the favor of Your evil creatures, engage myself in praising those who give me and be tempted to abuse those who do not give to me, although behind all these You are the master of giving and denying.

"Verily, You have power over all things, You are the all-Powerful One" (Holy Quran, 66: 8).

Sermon 224

Transience of the World, the Helplessness of Those Entombed

This [world] is a house surrounded by calamities and is well-known for deceitfulness. Its conditions do not last and those who inhabit it do not remain safe. Its conditions change and its ways alternate. Life in it is blameworthy and safety in it is non-existent. Yet its people are targets; it strikes them with its arrows and destroys them with death.

Be informed, O servants of Allah, that certainly you and all the things in this world in your possession are treading on the paths of those (who were) before you. They lived longer life-spans, had more populated houses and left behind more lasting tracks. Their voices have become silent, their movements have become stationary, their bodies have become rotten, their houses have become empty and their traces have become obliterated. Their magnificent places and spread-out carpets were changed into stones, laid-in-blocks and cave-like dug-out graves whose very foundation is based on ruins and whose construction has been made with soil. Their positions are contiguous, but those settled in them are like far-flung strangers. They are among the people of their area but feel lonely; they are free from having to work but are still engaged (in activity). They feel no attachment to homelands, nor do they keep contact with each

other, as neighbors do, despite nearness of neighborhood. And how can they meet each other when decay has ground them with its chest and stones and earth have eaten them up?

It is as though you too have gone where they have gone, the same sleeping place has caught you, the same place has detained you. What would then be your status when your affairs reach their end and graves are turned upside down?

"Every soul shall realize what it has sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and what they did fabricate (of false deities) would vanish from them" (Holy Quran, 10: 30).

Sermon 225

Supplication

O Lord! You are the most attached to Your lovers and the most ready to assist those who trust in You. You see them in their concealment, know whatever is in their conscience and are aware of the extent of their intelligence. Consequently, their secrets are open to You and their hearts are eager from You. If loneliness bores them, Your remembrance gives them solace. If distresses befall them, they solicit Your protection because they know that the reins of affairs are in Your hands and that their movements depend upon Your commands.

O Lord! If I am unable to express my request or cannot see my needs, then guide me towards my betterment. Take my betterment and my heart towards the sound goal. This is not against (the mode of) Your guidance nor anything new against Your ways of support.

O Lord! Deal with me with Your forgiveness and do not deal with me according to Your justice.

Sermon 226

About a Companion Who Passed Away from this World Before the Occurrence of Troubles

May Allah reward such-and-such man who straightened the curve, cured the disease, abandoned mischief and established the Sunnah. He departed (from this world) with untarnished clothes and few

shortcomings. He achieved the goodness (of this world) and remained safe from its evils. He adhered to Allah's obedience and feared Him as He deserves to be feared. He went away leaving the people in dividing ways wherein the misled cannot obtain guidance and the guided cannot attain certainty.

Who is this man to whom the Imam (ع) is referring? Ibn Abul-Hadid has written (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 14, pp. 3-4) that reference here is to another `Umar [not to caliph `Umar] and that these sentences have been uttered in his praise as indicated by the word `Umar' written under the phrase 'such-and-such' in Sayyid ar-Radi's own handwriting in the manuscript of Nahjul-Balagha which he wrote. This man is identified in Abul-Hadid's statement, but it is to be seen that if Sayyid ar-Radi had written the word `Umar' by way of explanation it should have existed, as other explanations by him have so remained, in those versions which have been copied from his manuscript. Even now, there exists in Mosul University, Iraq, the oldest manuscript of Nahjul-Balagha written by the famous calligraphist Yaqut al-Musta'simi. But nobody has afforded any clue to this explanation of Sayyid ar-Radi! Even if the view of Ibn Abul-Hadid is accepted, it will be viewed as representative of the personal opinion of Sayyid ar-Radi which may serve as a supplementary argument in support of an original argument. But this personal view cannot be accorded any significance.

It is strange how two and a half centuries after the demise of Sayyid ar-Radi, that is, in the seventh century A.H., Ibn Abul Hadid should make the statement that the reference here is to `Umar and that Sayyid ar-Radi himself had so indicated. The result: Some other annotaters also followed the same line. But the contemporaries of Sayyid ar-Radi who also wrote about Nahjul-Balagha have given no such indication in their writings although, as contemporaries, they should have had better information about Sayyid ar-Radi's writing. Thus, allama Ali ibn Nasir, who was a contemporary of Sayyid ar-Radi and who wrote an annotation of Nahjul-Balagha under the title A'lam Nahjul-Balagha, writes the following with regard to this sermon: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has praised one of his own companions for his good conduct. The man had died before the troubles that arose following the death of the Prophet of Allah (ص)."

This is supported by the annotations of Nahjul-Balagha written by allama Qutbu'd-Din ar-Rawandi (d. 573 A.H.). Ibn Abul-Hadid (Vol. 14, p. 4) and ibn Maytham al-Bahrani (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, p.

97) have quoted his following view: “By this man, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to one of his own companions who died before the mischief and disruption that occurred following the death of the Prophet of Allah (ص).”

Allama al-Hajj al-Mirza Habibullah al-Khoei is of the opinion that the person under discussion is Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar. He bases his view on the ground that after the assassination of Malik, the situation of the Muslim community was such as Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) explains in this sermon.”

Al-Khoei adds that: “Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has praised Malik repeatedly such as in his letter to the people of Egypt sent through Malik when he [Malik] was appointed [by Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع)] as the provincial governor of Egypt. It is similar to his utterances when the news of Malik’s assassination reached him. He then said the following: ‘Malik?! Who is Malik? If Malik was a stone, he was hard and solid; if he was a rock, he was a great rock which had no parallel. Women have become barren to give birth to such as Malik.’ Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had even expressed in some of his utterances that ‘Malik was to me as I was to the Holy Prophet (ص).’ Therefore, one who possesses such a status certainly deserves such attributes and even beyond that” (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 14, pp. 374-375).

If these words had been about `Umar, and if there was some trustworthiness about it, Ibn Abul-Hadīd will have recorded the authority or tradition, and it will have existed in history and been known among the people. But here nothing is found to prove the statement except a few self-concocted events. Thus, about the pronouns in the words “khayraha and sharraha”, he takes them to refer to the caliphate and writes that these words can apply only to one who enjoys power and authority because without authority it is impossible to establish the Sunnah or prevent the innovation. This is the gist of the argument which he has advanced on this occasion, although there is no proof to establish that the antecedent of this pronoun is the caliphate. It can rather refer to the world (when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع] says:) “He achieved good [of this world] and remained safe from its evils,” and this will be in accord with the context. Again, to regard authority as a condition for the safeguarding of people’s interest and the propagation of the Sunnah means to close the door to prompting others to good and dissuading them from evil, although Allah has assigned this duty to a group of the people without the condition of

authority: “There should be among you a group [umma] who calls people to virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong, and these shall be the successful ones” (Holy Quran, 3: 104).

Similarly, it is transmitted that the Prophet (ص) said, “So long as people go on promoting righteousness and dissuading evil and assisting each other in virtue and piety, they will remain in righteousness.”

Again, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), in the course of a will, says the following in general terms: “Establish the pillars of the Unity of Allah and the Sunnah, and keep both these lamps [of guidance] aflame.”

In these sayings, there is no hint that this obligation cannot be discharged without authority. Facts also tell us that (despite army, force, power and authority) the rulers could not prevent evil, nor could they propagate virtue to the extent to which some unknown godly persons were able to inculcate moral values by imprinting their morality on heart and minds, although they were not backed by any army or force, and they did not have any tools of power save their way of living in destitution. Undoubtedly, authority and control can bend heads down before it, but it is not necessary that it should also pave the way for virtue in hearts. History demonstrates that most of the rulers destroyed the features of Islam. Islam’s existence and progress have been possible, thanks to the efforts of those helpless persons who possessed nothing save poverty and destitution.

If it is emphasized that the reference here should only be to a ruler. But why should it not be taken to refer to a companion of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who had been a provincial governor, such as Salman al-Farsi for whose burial Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) made the trip all the way to al-Mada’in, and why is it not possible that Imam Ali ibn Abū Talib (ع) might have uttered these words after the burial as a comment on his life and way of governing Mada’in? However, to believe that they are about Umar [ibn al-Khattab] is without any proof whatsoever. In the end, Ibn Abul-Hadid quotes the following statements of (the historian) al-Tabari to back his hypothesis: “It is related from al-Mughirah ibn Shu’bah that when Umar died, Ibn Abu Khath’amah said crying, ‘O Umar! You were the man who straightened the curve, removed the ills, destroyed mischief, revived the Sunnah, remained chaste and departed without entangling [yourself] in evils’.” According to al-Tabari, al-Mughirah related saying, “When Umar was buried, I came to Ali and I wanted to hear something from him about `Umar. So, on my arrival, Imam Ali ibn

Abu Talib (ع) came out in this state: He was wrapped in one cloth after bathing and was jerking the hair of his heard and beard. He had no doubt that the Caliphate would come to him. On this occasion he said, 'May Allah have mercy on Umar ibn Abu Khath'amah. He has correctly said that he enjoyed the good things of the Caliphate and remained safe from its evils. By Allah! He did not say it himself but was made to say it" (al-Tabari, Vol. 1, p. 2763; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 12, p. 5; Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, p. 140).

The relater of this event is al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah who was saved from the penalty of having committed adultery with Umm Jamil by `Umar [ibn al-Khattab] despite the testimony against him. His openly abusing Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in Kufa under Mu`awiyah's behest are admitted facts of history. On this ground, what weight his statements can carry is quite clear. From the factual point of view also, this story cannot be accepted. Al-Mughirah's statement that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had no doubt about his Caliphate runs contrary to the facts. What were the factors from which he made this assumption when the actual facts were to the contrary? If the Caliphate was certain for anyone at the time, Othman was then the caliph. Thus, at the Consultative Committee, Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf said to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), "O Ali! Do not create a situation against yourself, for I have observed and consulted the people and they all want Othman" (al-Tabari, Vol. 1, p. 2786; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, p. 71; Abul-Fida', Vol. 1, p. 166).

Consequently, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was sure not to be made the caliph as has already been stated on the authority of al-Tabari's Tarikh, under the sermon of the Camel's Foam (ash-Shaqshaqiyya). In other words, on seeing the names of the members of the Consultative Committee, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) told al-Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib that the caliphate could not be given to anyone except to Othman since all the powers had been given to Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf who was Othman's brother-in-law (sister's husband) and Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas was a relative and tribesman of `Abd ar-Rahman. These two would collaborate to give the caliphate to him.

At this stage, the question arises as to why al-Mughirah urged Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to say something about `Umar. If he knew that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had good impressions about Umar, he should have also known his own. But if he thought that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did not entertain good impressions about him, then the purpose

of his asking Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to do so would be none other than that whatever he might say he would. By speaking his mind, an atmosphere against him would be created, and he would make the members of the Consultative Committee suspicious of him. The views of the members of the Consultative Committee are well understood from the very fact that by putting the condition of following the conduct of the first two Caliphs for electing the caliph, they thus demonstrated their adherence to and preference of both men. In these circumstances, when al-Mughirah tried to play this trick, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said just by way of relating a fact that `Umar achieved the good (of this world) and remained safe from its evil. This sentence has no connotation of praise or censure. `Umar did in his days enjoy all kinds of advantages, while his period was free from the mischief that cropped up soon thereafter. Having recorded this statement, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following: "From this event, the belief gains momentum that in this utterance, the allusion is towards Umar."

If the utterance refers to the statement of Ibn Abu Khat'amah about which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has said that they were not the heart's voice of the man but he was made to utter them, then there is no doubt that the reference was to `Umar. But the view that these words were uttered by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in praise of `Umar [ibn al-Khattab] is not at all established. Rather, from this incident, it is evidently proven that these words were uttered by Ibn Abu Khath'amah. Allah alone knows on what ground the words of Ibn Abu Khath'amah are quoted. Yet some people dare to argue that these words were uttered by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) about `Umar...!

It seems that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had uttered these words about someone on some occasion, then Ibn Abu Khath'amah used similar words on Omer's death. Yet even then, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's words were taken to be in praise of Umar! Otherwise, no mind except a deranged one can argue that the words uttered by Ibn Abu Khath'amah should be interpreted as being said by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in praise of `Umar. Can it be expected, after (a glance at) the sermon of the Camel's Foam, that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) might have uttered these words? Again, it is worth considering whether these words had been uttered by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on `Omer's death, then at the Consultative Committee, when he refused to follow the conduct of the (first) two Caliphs, it should have been said to him that only the other day he has said that `Umar had established the Sunnah and put an end to

innovations. So, since his conduct was in agreement with the Sunnah, what was the sense in accepting the Sunnah but refusing to follow his own conduct?!

Sermon 227

Allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) for the Caliphate. (A similar sermon in somewhat different version has already been cited.)

You drew out my hand towards you so you may swear the oath of allegiance to me, but I held it back. And you stretched it again, but I contracted it. Then you crowded over me as the thirsty camels crowd on the watering cisterns on their being taken there, so much so that shoes were torn, shoulder-cloths fell away and the weak got trampled upon. And the happiness of people on their allegiance to me was so manifest, small children felt joyful, the old staggered (up to me) for it, the sick, too, reached for it helter skelter and young girls ran for it even without veils.

Sermon 228

Fear of Allah, an Account of Those Who Remain Apprehensive of Death and Adopt Asceticism

Certainly, fear of Allah is the key to guidance, a provision for the next world, freedom from every kind of slavery, and deliverance from all ruin. With its help, the seeker succeeds, and whoever makes for safety escapes and achieves his aims.

Perform good deeds while such deeds are being raised (in value), repentance can be of benefit, prayer can be heard, conditions are peaceful and the pens (of the two angels) are in motion (to record the deeds). Hasten towards (virtuous) actions before the change (to old age) or to a lingering illness, or to a snatching death. Certainly, death will end your enjoyments, mar your pleasures and puts an end to your goals. It is an unwanted visitor, an invincible adversary and a non-discriminating killer. Its ropes have entrapped you, its evils have surrounded you, its arrowheads have aimed at you, its sway over you is great, its oppression on you is continuous and the chance of its missing you is remote.

Very soon you will be overwhelmed with the gloom of its shades, the severity of its illness, the darkness of its distresses, the senseless

utterances of its pangs, the grief of its destruction, the darkness of its encompassing and the bitterness of its taste. It will seem as if it has come to you out of a sudden, silenced those who were whispering to you, separated your group, destroyed your doings, devastated your houses and altered your successors to distribute your estate among the chief relatives who were of no benefit to you, or the grieved near ones who could not protect (you), or those rejoicing who did not lament (you).

Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to strive. Exert your effort, equip yourself, get ready and provide yourself from the place of provision. And let not the life of this world deceive you as it deceived those before you from among the past generations and by-gone periods - those who extracted its milk, benefitted from its neglectfulness, passed a long time and turned its new things into old (by living long). Their abodes turned into graves and their wealth into inheritable estate. They do not know who came to them (at their graves). They do not pay heed to those who weep over them nor respond to those who call upon them. Therefore, beware of this world, for it is treacherous, deceitful and cheating. It gives and takes back, covers with clothes and uncovers. Its pleasure does not last, its hardship does not end and its calamity does not terminate.

Part of the same sermon about the ascetics:

They are from among the people of this world but are not its people because they remain in it as though they do not belong to it. They act herein upon what they observe and hasten her in (to avoid) what they fear. Their bodies move among the people of the next world. They see that the people of this world attach importance to the death of their bodies while they themselves attach more importance to the death of the hearts of the living.

Sermon 229

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) delivered this sermon at Thi-Qar on his way to Basra. The historian al-Waqidi has mentioned it (in Kitab al-Jamal).

About the Holy Prophet (ص):

The Prophet (ص) manifested whatever he was commanded and conveyed the message of his Lord. Consequently, Allah repaired through him the cracks, joined through him the slits and created (through him)

affection among kin although they bore intense enmity in (their) chests and deep-seated rancor in (their) hearts.

Sermon 230

Abdullah ibn Zama'ah, who was one of the followers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), came to him once during his Caliphate to ask for some money. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to him:

This money does not belong to me, nor does it belong to you. It is the collective property of the Muslims and the acquisition of their swords. If you had taken part with them in their fighting, you would have had a share equal to theirs; otherwise, the earning of their hands cannot be for other than their own mouths.

Sermon 231

On the Inability of Ja'dah Ibn Hubayrah Al-Makhzumi[1] to Deliver a Sermon. About Speaking the Truth :

Be informed that the tongue is part of a man's body. If the man desists, speech will not cooperate with him, and when he dilates, speech will not give him time to stop. Certainly, we are the masters of speech. Its veins are fixed in us and its branches are hanging over us.

Be informed, may Allah have mercy on you, that you are living at a time when those who speak about right are few, when tongues are loath to utter the truth and those who stick to what is right are humiliated. The people of this time are engaged in disobedience. Their youths are wicked, their old men are sinful, their learned men are hypocrites and their speakers are psychopathics. Their youths do not respect their elders and their rich do not support the destitute.

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[199]Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) asked his nephew (sister's son), Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi, once to deliver a sermon. But when the man stood up to speak, his tongue faltered and he could utter nothing, whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) ascended the pulpit to speak and delivered a long sermon out of which a few sentences have been recorded here by Sayyid ar-Radi.

Sermon 232

Causes of Differences in the Features and Traits of People

Di'bil al-Yamami has related from Ahmed ibn Qutaybah, and the latter from Abdullah ibn Yazid, and he from Malik ibn Dihyah who said, "We were with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) when a discussion arose about the differences among men (in features and conduct), so Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following:

They differ among themselves because of the sources of their clay (from which they have been created). This is so because they are either from salty soil or sweet soil or from rugged earth or soft earth. They resemble each other on the basis of the affinity of their soil and differ according to its difference. Therefore, sometimes a person of handsome features is weak in intelligence, a tall stature person is of low courage, a virtuous person is ugly in appearance, a short stature person is far-sighted, a good-natured person has an evil trait, a person of perplexed heart has a bewildering mind and a sharp-tongued person has a wakeful heart.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has ascribed the differences in features and characters of people to the differences in the clay from which they are created and according to which their features are shaped and their characters are formed. Therefore, to the extent that their clay of origin is akin, their mental and imaginative tendencies, too, will be similar, and to the extent by which they differ, there will be a difference in their inclinations and tendencies. By "origins" of a thing are meant those things on which its coming into existence depends, but they do not have to be its cause. The word "teen" is the plural of "teenah" which means "origin" or "basis". Here, "teenah" means semen which, after passing through various stages of development, emerges into a human shape. Its origin means those constituents from which those items are created which help in the formation of semen. Thus, by salty, sweet, soft or hard soil, the reference is to these elementary ingredients. Since those elementary ingredients carry different properties, the semen growing out of them will also bear different characteristics and propensities which will (eventually) show forth in the differences in features and in the conduct of those born out of it.

Ibn Abul-Hadid has written (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 13, p. 19) that the phrase "origins of teenah" implies those preservative factors which are different in their properties as Plato and other philosophers

have held. The reason for calling them “origins of teenah” is that they serve as an asylum for the human body and prevent the elements from diffusion. Just as the existence of a thing hinges on its essence, in the same way the existence of this body, which is made up of elements, depends on preservative factors. So long as the preservative factor exists, the body, too, is safe from disruption and disintegration and the elements are also immune to diffusion and dispersal. When it leaves the body, the elements also get dispersed.

According to this explanation, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s words will mean that Allah has created different original elements of which some are vicious and some are virtuous, some are weak and some are strong. Every person will act according to his/her original element. If there is any similarity in the inclinations of two persons, it is attributed to their original element. In it, they are similar. And when their tendencies differ, it is because their original elements are not similar. But this conclusion is not correct because Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s words do not only refer to differences in conduct and behavior but also in features and shapes. The differences of features and shapes cannot be the result of differences in original elements.

In any case, whether the original elements make up the cause of differences in features and in one’s conduct, or whether the elementary ingredients are the cause, these words appear to lead to the negation or volition [of such an assumption]. They attempt to prove the dominance, the upper-hand, (of destiny) over human actions. If man’s capacity for thinking and acting is dependent on one’s “teenah”, then he will be compelled to behave himself in a fixed way on account of which he will neither deserve praise for good deeds nor be held blameworthy for bad ones. But this hypothe sis is incorrect because it is well established that just as Allah knows everything in creation after its coming into being, in the same way, He knew it before its creation. Thus, He knew what actions man would perform of his free will and what he could leave. Therefore, Allah gave him the ability to act according to his free will and created him from a suitable “teenah”. This “teenah” is not the cause of his actions so as to snatch away from him his free will. But the meaning of creating from suitable “teenah” is that Allāh does not by force stand in man’s way but allows him to tread the path which he wants of his own free will.

Sermon 233

Spoken When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Busy in the Funeral Ablution (Ghusl) and Shrouding of the Holy Prophet (ص)

May my parents be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! With your death, the process of Prophethood, the revelation and heavenly messages have stopped and which had not stopped at the death of others (prophets). Your status with us (members of your family) is so special that our grief for having lost you has become a source of consolation (to us) as against the grief of all others; our grief for having lost you is also common so that all Muslims may share it equally. If you had not commended endurance and prevented us from wailing, we would have produced tears abundantly. Even then, the pain will not have subsided and this grief will not have ended. They will have been too little an indication of our grief for you. But this (death) is a matter that cannot be reversed nor is it possible to avoid. May my father and mother die for you; do remember us with Allah and take care of us.

Sermon 234

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Relating His Own Condition after the Prophet's Migration till Their Meeting

I began to follow the path adopted by the Prophet (ص) and tread on the tracks of his remembrance till I reached al-Arj.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's words "faata'u dhikrahu" constitute the highest forms of brevity and eloquence. He means to say that he was being given news about the Prophet (ص) from the commencement of his setting out till he reached this place, and he has expressed this notion in this wonderful expression."

Since the inception of Prophethood, the Prophet (ص) remained in Mecca for thirteen years. For him, this period was one of the most severe oppression and destitution. The unbelievers from the Quraish tribe had closed all the doors of livelihood against him, sparing no means to inflict hardship upon him, so much so that in order to put an end to his life, they began plotting with each other as to how to do so. Forty of their dignitaries assembled in the hall of audience (Dar an-Nadwa) for consultation and decided that one individual should be picked out from

every tribe, then they would jointly attack him. In this way, Banu Hashim would not dare to face all the other tribes, and the matter would quiet down on the payment of blood money. To give a practical shape to this scheme, these people lay in ambush near the house of the Prophet (ص) on the night of the first of Rabi'al-Awwal. As the Prophet (ص) slept in his bed, he was to be thus attacked. On one hand, the preparation for killing him was complete. On the other hand, Allah informed him of all the intrigues of the unbelieving tribesmen of Quraish, commanding him to let Ali (ع) sleep in his bed while he himself had to immigrate to Medīna. The Prophet (ص) sent for Ali (ع). Disclosing to him his plan, he said the following: "Ali (ع)! Lie in my bed." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) inquired: "O Messenger of Allah! Will your life be saved by my sleeping here?" The Prophet (ص) said, "Yes." Hearing this, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) performed a prostration as a token of thanks-giving and, exposing himself fully to the danger, lay on the Prophet's bed while the Prophet (ص) departed. The unbelieving tribesmen of Quraish were peeping and getting ready for the attack. Abu Lahab said, "It is not proper to attack in the night because there are women and children also living in the house. When the morning dawns, you should attack him, but keep watch during the night lest he should not move and go anywhere else." Consequently, they kept their eyes on the bed throughout the night and soon. When dawn drew nigh, they proceeded stealthily. Hearing the sound of their footsteps, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) removed the covering from his face and stood up. The tribesmen of Quraish gazed at him with disbelieving eyes as to whether it was an illusion or a fact. After making sure that it was Ali, they inquired, "Where is Muhammad (ص)?" Ali replied, "Did you entrust him to me so that now you are asking me about him?!" They had no reply. Men ran to pursue him but found footprints only up to the cave [of Hira] in themountain of Thawr. Beyond that, there were neither footprints nor any sign of hiding in the cave. They came back bewildered while the Prophet (ص), after staying in the cave for three days, left for Medina. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) passed these three days in Mecca, returned to the people their properties which they had entrusted the Prophet (ص) to safeguard for them then set off towards Medīna to join the Prophet (ص). Up to al-Arj, a place between Mecca and Medina, he kept getting news about the Prophet (ص) and he maintained his anxious march till he finally met the Prophet (ص) at Quba on the twelfth of Rabi' al-Awwal where the Prophet (ص) was waiting for him, refusing to enter Medina without him (al-Tabari, Tafsir, Vol. 9, pp. 148-151; Tarikh, Vol.

1, pp. 1232-1234; Ibn Sa`d, Al-Tabaqat, Vol. 1, Part. 1, pp. 153-154; Ibn Hisham, As-Sira, Vol. 2, pp. 124-128; Ibn al-Athir, Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 4, p. 25; Al-Kamil, Vol. 2, pp. 101-104; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, Vol. 2, pp. 302-303; Tarikh, Vol. 3, pp. 180-181; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 13, pp. 303-306; al-Sayyuti, Al-Durr al-Manthur, Vol. 3, pp. 179-180;'allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 19, pp. 28-103).

Sermon 235

About Preparing Provisions for the next World, While Being in this World, and Performing Good Deeds Before Death

Perform (good) deeds while you are still in the vastness of this life, while the books are open (for recording your deeds), repentance is allowed, the runner away (from Allah) is being called upon (to revert) and the sinner is being given hope (of forgiveness) before the (light of) action is put off, before time expires, life ends, the door of repentance is closed and the angels ascend to the sky.

Therefore, a man should derive benefit from himself for himself, from the living for the dead, from the mortal for the immortal, and from the who departs for the one who stays. A man should fear Allah while he is given a life to lead up to his death and is given time to act. A man should control himself by the rein and hold it with its bridle. Thus, by the rein he should prevent it from disobedience towards Allah, and by the bridle he should lead it towards obedience to Allah.

Sermon 236

About the Two Arbitrators (Abu Musa al-Ash`ari and Amr Ibn Al-As) and the Disparagement of the Syrians.

Rude, low people and mean slaves! They have been collected from all sides and picked up from every pack. They need to be taught the tenets (of Islam), disciplined, instructed, trained, supervised and led by the hand. They are neither Muhajirun nor Ansar, nor are those who made their dwellings in the abode (in Medina) and in belief.

Look! They have chosen for themselves one who is nearest of all to what they desire, while you have chosen one who is nearest to what you dislike. You may certainly recall that the other day Abdullah ibn Qays (Abu Musa al-Ash`ari) was saying, "It is mischief; therefore, cut

away your bow-string and sheathe your swords." If he was right (in what he said), then he was wrong in marching (against us) without being forced. But if he was lying, then he should be viewed with suspicion. Therefore, send `Abdullah ibn Abbas to face `Amr ibn al-As. Make use of these days and safeguard the borders of Islam. Do you not see that your cities are being attacked and your prowess is being aimed at?

Sermon 237

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Describes Here the Members of the Prophet's Family

They are the life of knowledge and the death of ignorance. Their forbearance tells you of their knowledge and their silence the wisdom of their speech. They do not go against right, nor do they differ (among themselves) about it. They are the pillars of Islam and the havens of (its) protection. With them, right has returned to its status and wrong has left its place, so its tongue is severed from the root. They have understood the religion attentively and carefully, not by mere heresy nor from relaters because those who relate knowledge are many, but those who absorb it are few.

Sermon 238

When Othman ibn Affan was surrounded, Abdullah ibn Abbas brought a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) from Othman in which the latter expressed the desire that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) go to his estate, Yanbu', so that the proposal that was being mooted out for him to become caliph would subside. Othman had made this same request earlier. Upon this, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to Ibn Abbas:.

O Ibn Abbas! Othman just wants to treat me like the water-drawing camel so that I may go forward and backward with the bucket. Once he sent word that I should go out, then he sent me word that I should return. Now, again he sends me word that I should go out. By Allah, I continued to protect him till I feared lest I should become a sinner.

Sermon 239

Exhorting His Men to Carry out Jihad, Asking Them to Refrain from Seeking a Life of Luxury

Allah admonishes you to thank Him and assigns to you His affairs. He has allowed time in the limited field (of life) so that you may vie with each other in seeking the reward (of Paradise). Therefore, tighten your belts and wrap up the hems. High courage and dinners do not go together. Sleep causes weakness in the big affairs of the day and (its) darkness obliterates the thoughts of courage.

Selected writings of our Master, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع), His Letters to his Enemies and Governors of his Provinces, including selections of his Letters appointing his Administrative Officers and Injunctions to Members of his Family and Companions

Letter 1

Addressed to the people of Kufa at the time of his march from Medina to Basra .

From the servant of Allah, Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, to the people of Kufa who are the foremost among the supporters and the chiefs of the Arabs.

I am reminding you of what happened to Othman so that its memory may be like seeing its events. People criticized him, and I was the only man from among the Muhajirun (immigrants) to ask him to make it his pursuit to please (the Muslims) the most and to offend them the very least. As for Talhah and az-Zubayr, their lightest step about him was hard, and their softest voice was strong. Aisha, too, was angry with him. Consequently, a group overpowered him and killed him. Then, people swore allegiance to me, not by force or compulsion, but obediently and out of their free will.

You should know that Medina has been vacated by its residents who have abandoned it. It is boiling like a huge cauldron and rebellion is fixed on its axis, moving with full force. So, hasten towards your amir (commander) and proceed forward to fight your enemy, if Allah, to Whom Might and Majesty belong, so wills.

Ibn Maythmam writes (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, p. 338) that when on hearing about themischief-mongering of Talhah and az-Zubayr, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) set off for Basra. He sent this letter to the people of Kufa through Imam al-Hassan and Ammar ibn Yasir from [the town of] al-Maa'al-Adhb, while ibn Abul-Hadid has written (in Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 14, pp. 8, 16; al-Tabari, Vol. 1, p. 3139, and ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, p. 223) that when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) camped at ar-Rabadha, he sent this letter through Muhammad ibn Ja`far

ibn Abu Talib and Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr. In this letter, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) clearly sheds a light on the point that the assassination of Othman was the result of the efforts of Aisha, Talhah and az-Zubayr, and that it was they who played a major role in it. In fact, Aisha went beyond her bounds and exposed his shortcomings in public meetings, ordering that he should be killed. Thus, Shaikh Muhammad Abdo has written the following: "Once, Othman was on the pulpit when Umm al-Mu'minin [mother of the faithful] Aisha took out the shoes and the shirt of the Prophet (ص) from under her outer covering mantle and said the following: 'These are the shoes of the Messenger of Allah and his shirt. They have not yet decayed while you have altered his religion and changed his Sunnah.' Upon this, heated words were exchanged between them following which she said, 'Kill this Na'thal', likening Othman with a known long-bearded Jew (of that name)" (Nahjul-Balagha, printed in Egypt, Vol. 2, p. 3; also see Ansab al-Ashraf, Vol. 5, p. 88; Abul-Fida', Vol. 1, p. 172).

People were already displeased with Othman, so this event increased their boldness. They, hence, surrounded his mansion so that he might mend his ways or abdicate from the caliphate. In these circumstances, there was serious apprehension that if he did not accept either of the two alternatives, he would be killed. All this was observed by Aisha, but she paid no heed to it and, leaving him under siege, she decided to leave Medina for Mecca. On this occasion, Marwan ibn al-Hakam [her cousin] and Attab ibn Asīd said the following to her, "If you postpone your departure, it is possible his ['Othman's] life may be saved and this crowd [laying siege around his mansion] may disperse," whereupon she said that she had decided to go for hajj and that that could not be changed. It was then that Marwan recited this couplet by way of a proverb:

> Qays set fire to my cities, and when they were ablaze,
> He slipped away, saving himself clear of it.

Similarly, Talhah and az-Zubayr were also very angry with him and they were in the vanguard of those fanning this fire, intensifying the opposition to his caliphate. From this angle, they were, to a great extent, taking part in the assassination and were responsible for shedding his blood. Other people also knew them in this light and regarded them as his murderers, while their supporters, too, were not able to offer any explanation (for absolving them). Thus, Ibn Qutaybah writes that when al-Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah met Aisha at Awtas, he asked her the following

question: “O Umm al-Mu’minin! Where are you bound for?” She replied, “I am going to Basra.” He inquired for what purpose and she replied, “To avenge Othman’s murder.” He said, “But his assassins are with you!” Then he turned to Marwan and inquired where he was going. He replied that he, too, was going to Basra. He inquired about the purpose and the reply was: “To avenge Othman’s murder.” Then he again said, “`Othman’s assassins are with you. These Talhah and az-Zubayr have killed him” (Al-Imama wal-Siyasa, Vol. 1, p. 60).

In any case, when, after laying the blame on Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), this group that had killed `Othmān reached Basra, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) also rose to quell this mischief; he wrote this letter to the people of Kufa to solicit their support. Upon this, their combatants and warriors rose in large numbers and enlisted in his army. They faced the enemy with full courage which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) also acknowledged. Thus, the letter hereafter is in acknowledgment.

Letter 2

Written to the People of Kufa after the Victory in Basra

May Allah reward you, townsmen (of Kufa), on behalf of a member of your Prophet’s family, with the best reward that He bestows on those who act in obedience to Him and on those who thank Him for His bounties. Surely, you heard (me) and obeyed, and when you were called upon, you promptly responded.

Document 3

Written to Shurayh ibn al-Harith (al-Kindi), Kufa’s Judge

It is related that Shurayh ibn al-Harith (al-Kindi), who was Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s Qadi (judge) of Kufa, during his tenure, bought a house for eighty dinars. When it became known to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he sent for him saying:

I have come to know that you have purchased a house for eighty dinars and that you have written a document [deed of ownership] for it and put testimony on it.”

Shurayh replied, "Yes, O Imam ibn Abu Talib; it is so." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) cast an angry look at him and said:

O Shurayh, beware, shortly one person (the angel of death) will come to you who will not look at the document, nor will he question you about your testimony but take you out of it far away and deposit you in your grave quite alone. Look, O Shurayh! If you have purchased this house from money other than yours, or paid the price from an unlawful source, you have incurred on your soul the loss of this world as well as of the next. If you had come to me at the time of purchase, I would have written for you a document on this paper, then you would have liked to purchase the house even for one dirham, not to speak of more. That document is this:

This is about a purchase made by a humble slave (of Allah) from another slave ready to depart (for the next world). He has purchased a house out of houses of deceit in the area of mortals and in the neighborhood of mortals. This house has four boundaries as follows: The first boundary is contiguous to sources of calamities; the second boundary adjoins the sources of distress; the third boundary adjoins devastating desires, and the fourth boundary adjoins deceitful Satan, and it is towards this that the door of this house opens. This house has been purchased by one who has been waylaid by desires from one who is being driven by death at the price of leaving the honor of contentment and entering into the humility of want and submissiveness. If the buyer encounters some (evil) consequences of this transaction, then it is for the one who dismantles the bodies of monarchs, snatches the lives of despots, destroys the domain of Pharaohs, Kisras[200], Caesars[201], Tubbas[202] and Himyars[203]

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[200]"Kisra" is the Arabized word of Khusraw [Khosroe] which means "a king whose domain extends to a vast area". This was the title of the rulers of then Persia.

[201]"Caesar" was one of the rulers of Rome. In Latin, it means the child whose mother dies before delivery and who is extracted by cutting her body open. Since among the Kings of Rome, Augustus was born like this, he was known by this name. Thereafter, this word was adopted as the title of every ruler.

[202]"Tubba'" is an appellation of each of the Kings of Yemen who had Himyar and Hadramawt under his control. Their names have been mentioned in the Holy Quran in 44:37 and 50:14.

[203]Himyar was an important tribe in the ancient Sabaen kingdom of south-western Arabia. Later in time, its kings were the powerful rulers of much of southern Arabia from c. 115 BC to c. AD 525. The Himyarites were concentrated in the area known as Thu Raydan (later called Qataban) on the

and all those who amass wealth upon wealth and go on increasing it, who build high houses and decorate them and collect treasures and preserve them, as they claimed according to their own thinking, for children to take them to the place of accounting and judgement and the status of reward and punishment. "When the verdict will be passed those who stood on falsehood will then be the losers" (Holy Quran, 40: 78).

This document is appreciated by intelligence when free from the shackles of desire and from the adornments of this world.

Letter 4

To One of the Officers of His Army

If they[204] return to the umbrella of obedience, then this is all that we want. But if the condition of these people points out towards disruption and disobedience, then, taking with you those who obey you, you must rush against those who disobey you. While you have those with you who follow you, do not worry about those who hold back from you because the absence of a half-hearted man is better than his presence, and his sitting down is better than his rising.

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coast of present-day Yemen. Thus, they were probably aided in the overthrow of their Sabaean [or Sabian] kinsmen by the discovery of a sea route from Egypt to India which deprived the inland Sabaean kingdom of its former importance as a center for offshore trade. The Himyarites (classical Homeritae) inherited the Sabaean language and culture and from their capital at Zafar, their power at times extended eastward as far as the Persian Gulf and northward into the Arabian Desert. At the beginning of the 4th century AD, the Himyarite capital was moved northward to San'a. Later in the same century, both Christianity and Judaism gained firm footholds in the area. Internal disorders and changing trade routes caused the kingdom to decline. In 525 AD, after several unsuccessful attempts, Abyssinian invaders finally crushed the Himyarites. A Himyar appeal to Peria for aid led to Persian control in 575 AD. (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica* [Micropaedia] Vol. 5, p. 49, ed. 1973-1974).

[204]When `Othman ibn Hunayf, Governor of Basra, informed Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) of the arrival of Talhah and az-Zubayr at Basra and of their intentions, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this letter to him. In it, he instructed him that in case the enemy was bent on fighting and he had to face it, he should not enlist on his side those who on the one hand showed consideration for the personalities of `}'isha, Talhah and az-Zubayr and who, on the other hand, had agreed to fight against them merely by persuasion because such people could not be expected to fight steadfastly nor could then be depended

Letter 5

To al-Ash`ath ibn Qays (al-Kindi), Governor of Azerbaijan

Certainly, your assignment is not a morsel for you, but it is a trust round your neck, and you have been charged with the protection (of the people) on behalf of your superiors. It is not for you to be oppressive towards the subjects, nor to put your life at risk save on strong grounds. You have in your hands the funds which are the property of Allah to Whom belong Might and Majesty, and you hold its charge till you pass it on to me. Probably I will not be one of the bad rulers for you, and this is the end of the matter.

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was through with the Battle of Jamal, he wrote to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays (al-Kindi), who had been the Governor of Azerbaijan since the days of Othman, to send the revenue and levies of his province to him [in Kufa]. But since al-Ash'ath had fears about the future of his status and assignment, he intended to pocket all this money like other officers appointed by Othman. Therefore, as soon as this letter reached him, he sent for his chief associates. Having mentioned this letter to them, he said the following: "I fear that this money will be taken away from me; I, therefore, intend to join Mu`awiyah." It was then that those people said that it was a matter of shame to leave the kith and kin and to seek refuge with Mu`awiyah. Consequently, on the advice of those people, he postponed the implementation of his idea to run away, but he did not agree to part with the money. On getting this information, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent Hijr ibn Adiy al-Kindi to bring the man to him to Kufa. He persuaded him and brought him to Kufa. On reaching there, his kit was found to contain four hundred thousand Dirhams out of which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) left thirty thousand for the man and deposited the rest in the public treasury.

Letter 6

To Mu`awiyah (ibn Abu Sufyan)

Verily, those who swore allegiance to Abu Bakr, Umar and Othman have sworn allegiance to me on the same basis on which they swore allegiance to them. Whoever was present had no choice (to

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upon. Rather, such people will try to discourage others, too. Therefore, it was only good to ignore such people.

consider), and whoever was absent had no right to reject, and consultation was confined to the Muhajirun and the Ansar. If they agree on an individual and take him to be the Caliph, it will be deemed to imply seeking Allah's pleasure. If anyone keeps away by way of demonstrating his objection or for innovation, they will return him to the status from where he kept away. If he refuses, they will fight him for following a course other than that of the believers, and Allah will put him back from where he had run away. By my life, O Mu`awiyah, if you see with your brain without any passion, you will find me the most innocent of all with regard to Othman's blood, and you will surely know that I was in seclusion from him, unless you conceal what is quite open to you. Then you may commit an outrage (on me) as you like, and that is the end of the matter.

When all the people of Medina swore allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Mu`awiyah refused to go along, fearing his own power being jeopardized and to contest Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's caliphate. He concocted the excuse that it had not been agreed upon unanimously and that, therefore, after canceling it, there should be another general election, although the caliphate from which (the process of) election was started was the result of a timely situation. There was no question about the common vote so it could be called the result of the people's election. Rather, it was imposed on the people and assumed to be their verdict. From then, it became a principle that whoever the nobles of Medīna elected will be deemed to represent the entire world of Islam; nobody would be allowed to question it, whether he was present at the time of election or not. In any case, after the establishment of this principle, Mu`awiyah had no right to propose a re-election nor to refuse the swearing of allegiance when he had in practice recognized these caliphates which, it was alleged, had been settled by the important people of Medina. That is why when he alleged this election was unbinding, refusing to swear allegiance, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) pointed out to him the (recognized) way of election and smashed his argument. It was a method known as arguing with the adversary on the basis of his wrong premises so as to refute his argument, since Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) never at any stage regarded consultation (with the chiefs) or the common vote to be the criterion of validity of the caliphate. Otherwise, with regard to the caliphate, about which it is alleged that they were based on the unanimity of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, he would have regarded that unanimity of vote as a sound authority, holding it as valid. But his refusal of the swearing of allegiance in the very first period, which could not be denied by anyone, is a proof of the fact that he did not regard these self-

concocted methods as the criterion of (validity of) the caliphate. That is why at all times he continued pressing his own case for the caliphate, which was also established on the basis of the Prophet's statements and actions. However, to place it before Mu`awiyah meant opening the door to questions and answers. He, therefore, attempted to convince him of his own premises and beliefs so that there could be no scope for interpretation nor for confusing the matter. In fact, the real objective of Mu`awiyah was to prolong the matter so that at some point his own authority might gain some support.

Letter 7

To Mu`awiyah

I have received from you the packet of unconnected pieces of advice and an embellished letter. You have written it because of your misguidance and dispatched it because of your lack of wisdom. This is the letter of a man who has neither light to show him the way nor a leader to guide him on the right path. Passion prompted him and he responded to it. Misguidance led him and he followed it. Consequently, he began to speak nonsense and went recklessly astray.

An Excerpt from the Same Letter:

Because allegiance is once and for all, it is not open for reconsideration, nor is there any scope for fresh proceedings of an election. Whoever remains out of it is deemed to be critical of Islam, while whoever remains argumentative about it is a hypocrite.

Letter 8

To Jarir Ibn Abdillah Al-bajali When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Sent Him to Mu`awiyah (And There Was a Delay in His Return)

When you receive this letter of mine, you must ask Mu`awiyah to take a final decision and to follow a determined course. Then ask him to choose either war that exiles him from home or a dishonorable peace. If he chooses war, leave him alone, but if he chooses peace, secure an oath of allegiance from him, and that is an end to the matter**.**

Letter 9

To Mu`awiyah

Our people (the tribesmen of Quraish) decided to kill our Prophet (ص) and to uproot us. They caused us many worries, behaved with us harshly, denied us the ease of life, exposed us to fear, forced us to seek refuge in a rugged mountain and ignited for us the flames of war.

Allah then gave us determination to protect His religion and defend His honor. The believers among us expected (heavenly) rewards from so doing, and the unbelievers among us gave their support because of kinship. Those who accepted Islam from among the tribesmen of Quraish were away from the distresses in which we were involved either because of a pledge that protected them or because of the tribe that would rise to support them. They were, therefore, safe from being killed. The way with the Prophet (ص) was that when fighting became fierce and people began to lose ground, he would send forward members of his family and through them protect his companions from the attacks with swords and spears. In this way, `Ubaydah ibn al-Harith was killed on the Day of Badr, Hamzah (ibn `Abdul-Muttalib) on the Day of Uhud, and Ja`far (ibn Abu Talib) on the Day of Mu'tah. One more person, whom I can name if I wish, desired to seek martyrdom as they did, but their deaths approached, while his had not.

How strange it is that I am being grouped with him who never had a briskness of pace like mine, nor had he, to his credit, any achievement like mine unless he claims something of which I do not know. In any case, all praise belongs to Allah.

As regarding your request to hand over to you the murderers of Othman, I have contemplated over this matter and I do not find that handing them over to you or to someone else is possible for me. By my life, if you do not give up your wrong ways and disruptive deeds, you would surely know them. They would shortly be seeking you and would not give you the trouble of seeking them on land, sea, mountains or plains. But this search would be painful for you and their visit would not give you happiness. Peace be on those whoever deserves it.

When the Messenger of Allah (ص) was commanded (by Allah) to call people to (believe in) the Unity of Allah, the powers of unbelief and disobedience stood up to block the way of truthfulness and the tribes of

Quraish decided to quell this voice through coercion and force. Love for their idols was so strong in the hearts of these unbelievers, they were not prepared to hear a single word against them. The idea of one God was enough to rouse their passions. In addition, they were made to hear such epithets about their gods that gave them no better status than lifeless stones. When they realized that their principles and beliefs were in jeopardy, they prepared themselves to trouble the Prophet (ص). They got ready to try every means to reach that end. They adopted such pain-inflicting devices (against the Prophet [ص]) that it was impossible for him to step out of his house. Those who had accepted Islam during this period, too, had to face continuous tribulations. For example, these adherents to such beliefs were often placed on the burning ground, under the parching sun, and beaten with straps and stones till they lost their consciousness. When the atrocities of the tribesmen of Quraish rose to this extent, the Prophet (ص) permitted such adherents to leave Mecca and immigrate to Abyssinia in the fifth year since his call to Prophethood. The tribesmen of Quraish followed them there as well, but the ruler of Abyssinia refused to hand the believers over to them. Through his fairness and justice, he did not permit any trouble to befall them.

On the other side of the sea, the Prophet's preaching continued. The magnetism and influence of truth was producing its effect. People were impressed by his teachings and personality. They came into his fold as a result of which the tribesmen of Quraish felt much perturbed, so they tried to stop this increasing influence and power. When they could not do anything, they decided to sever all ties with Banu Hashim and Banū Abdul-Muttalib, to have no social contacts with them, and to have no transactions with them, perhaps they would be forced to give up supporting the Prophet (ص), then they would deal with him as they pleased. Consequently, they concluded a mutual agreement about it, and a document was written on the subject and was deposited safely. After this agreement, although the locality was the same and the inhabitants, too, were the same, yet for Banu Hashim every nook and corner became strange and well-known faces turned as if they had never known each other. All of them turned their faces and stopped mutual meetings and contacts. In these circumstances, there was also the apprehension that the Prophet (ص) might be attacked suddenly in a valley outside the city. For this reason, they were forced to take refuge in a place called Shi'b (quarter) of Abu Talib. At this stage, those Banu Hashim who had not yet accepted Islam shared these privations on account of lineal kinship and offered defence at the hour of need, while those who had accepted Islam,

such as Hamzah and Abu Talib, were actively protecting the Prophet (ص) as their religious obligation. In particular, Abu Talib had given up all his ease and comfort, spending his days consoling the Prophet (ص) and his nights changing his bed from one place to another. Thus, if the Prophet (ص) used a bed one night, the next night Ali was to sleep in it, so that in case someone attacked, Ali should suffer the brunt instead.

This was a period of great privation and trouble for Banu Hashim. If they could get leaves of trees to eat, that was enough for them; otherwise, they had to near their starvation. After the lapse of three years in these hardships, Zuhayr ibn Abu Umayyah (whose mother was ‘Atika daughter of Abdul-Muttalib), Hisham ibn Amr ibn Rabi`ah (who had a family maternal kinship with Banu Hashim), al-Mut’im ibn `Adiy ibn Nawfal ibn Abd Manaf, Abul-Bakhtari al-As ibn Hisham ibn al-Mughirah and Zama’ah ibn al-Aswad ibn al-Muttalib proposed that this agreement should be abrogated. For a discussion of this issue, the chiefs from among the tribesmen of Quraish assembled in the precincts of the Ka`ba. No decision had yet been taken when Abu Talib came out of the Valley and joined them. He said to them, “My nephew Muhammad (ص) has told me that the paper on which this agreement was written has been eaten by white-ants and nothing in it has remained save the name of Allah. So, you should send for the document and see it. If he is correct, then you should give up your animosity, and if he is wrong, I am ready to hand him over to you.” The document was brought and examined. It was, indeed, a fact that with the exception of the words “In Your name, O God”, written on the top of all documents in those days, the rest of it had been eaten away by white-ants. Seeing this, al-Mut’im ibn `Adiy tore off the writing; thus, this cruel agreement was abrogated. At last, Banu Hashim abandoned the life of oppression and helplessness. But even after this, there was no change in the unbelievers’ behavior towards the Prophet (ص). Rather, they were so keen in their enmity and malice against him that they started thinking of taking his life away. Consequently, the great event of Hijra (migration of the Holy Prophet [ص] from Mecca to Medina) took place. Although on this occasion Abu Talib was no longer alive, Ali represented him by lying down on the Prophet’s bed; it was the lesson taught by Abu Talib through which he managed to protect the Holy Prophet’s life.

Although these events were not unknown to Mu`awiyah, yet by recounting to him the deeds of his predecessors, the intention was to awaken his malicious spirit. Therefore, his attention has been drawn to the hardships inflicted (on the Holy Prophet [ص] and his adherents) by the

tribesmen of Quraish, especially Banu Abd Shams, so that he might see the conduct of each of the followers of the truth and the followers of falsehood would then realize that he himself was treading on the right path or just following his forefathers.

Letter 10

To Mu`awiyah

What would you do when the coverings of this world in which you are wrapped are removed from you? The world attracted you with its embellishments and deceived you with its pleasures. It called you, and you responded to it. It led you, and you followed it. It commanded you, and you obeyed it. Shortly an informer will inform you of things against which there will be no shield (to protect you). Therefore, keep off from this affair, take heed of the accounting (on the Day of Judgement), get ready for death that will soon overtake you, and do not lend your ears to those who have gone astray. If you do not do so, I shall recall to you whatever you have forgotten because you are a man living in ease and luxury[205]. Satan has taken you in his clutches, secured his wishes in you and taken complete control of you like your soul and blood.

O Mu`awiyah! When were you ever a protector of the subjects and a guardian of the affairs of the people without granting some people distinction (over others)? We seek Allah's protection against the befalling of previous misfortunes, and I warn you lest you should continue being deceived by desires and your outer appearance becomes different from your inner self.

You have called me to war. It is better if you left the people on one side and you yourself came out to meet me (on the battleifield) and thus spare both our parties having to fight. It will then be known which one of us has a rusted heart and covered eyes. I am the father of al-Hassan who killed your grandfather (`Utbah ibn Rabī`ah), your brother (Hanzalah ibn Abu Sufyan) and your uncle (Al-Walid ibn `Utbah) by cutting them to pieces on the day of Badr. The same sword is with me, and I meet my adversary with the same heart. I have not altered the religion, nor do I follow any new prophet. I am surely treading on that very highway which you had willingly forsaken then was forced to adopt.

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[205]This is in reference to the following verse: "We sent no warner into any city except that its men who lived in ease (and luxury) said, 'We disbelieve in the message with which you have been sent'" (Holy Quran, 34: 34).

You think that you have come out seeking revenge for Othman's blood. Certainly, you know how Othman's blood was shed. If you want to avenge it, avenge it there. It is as though I see that when war is cutting you with its teeth, you cry like camels moaning under heavy loads. And it is as though I see your party bewildered by the incessant striking of the swords, the occurrence of death, and the falling of bodies after bodies, calling me towards the Holy Quran although they would themselves be either unbelievers, deniers of the truth or renegades of allegiance after having sworn it.

This previous prediction of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is about the battle of Siffin. Herein, he has depicted the whole picture in very few words. Thus, on one side Mu`awiyah was bewildered on account of the attacks of the Iraqis and was thinking to run away while, on the other, his army was crying under the constant onslaught of death. Eventually, when there was no way to escape, they raised the Holy Quran on the spears and shouted for peace. By this device, the remaining persons saved their lives.

This prediction, as ibn Abul-Hadid al-Mu'tazili says, "is either a true prophetic keen eye of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), which signifies a great power, or it is an information through knowledge of the unknown (ilmul-ghayb) which is the most significant and wonderful. However, both cases are in the state of extreme significance and beauty.

Ibn Abul-Hadid has further quoted the same prediction from other letters of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to Mu`awiyah (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 15, pp. 83-85).

This prediction cannot be attributed to imagination, to guessing or to the drawing of inference from events, nor can these details be ascertained by wit or far-sightedness. Only he could disclose them whose source of information is either the Prophet's own revelation-bearing tongue or the Divine inspiration.

Instruction 11

Given to the Contingent Sent to Confront an Enemy

When you proceed towards your enemy, the status of your force should be on the approaches of high grounds or edges of mountains or bends of rivers, so that it may serve you as a place to return to. Your encounter should be from one side or from two. Position scouts on the

peaks of mountains and the raised sides of the high ground so that the enemy may not approach you from any place, whether of danger or of safety. And be admonished that the vanguard of an army serves as their eyes and the eyes of the vanguard are their informers. Beware of dispersal. When you halt, do so collectively, and when you move, you should move together. When night comes, fix your spears in a circle and do not sleep except for dosing or napping.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) put Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi and Shurayh ibn Hani al-Harithi in command of contingents of eight thousand and four thousand strong at the camp of an-Nukhayla, ordering them to advance towards Syria. A dispute arose then between them about their ranks. They informed Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) of it and wrote letters of complaints about each other. In reply, Imām Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote to them that when they marched jointly, the command of the joint force would be with Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi, and if they marched separately, each commander would be in charge of his own force.

In this letter, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) also wrote certain instructions for them. Here, Sayyid ar-Radi takes down only the portion containing the instructions. These instructions are not only useful as regards the strategies of fighting in those days, but their utilization and importance in bringing out the principles of fighting in our days as well is undeniable. These instructions are: At the time of encounter with the enemy forces, the assailants should camp on tops of mountains and curves of rivers. This way, the low areas of the rivers would serve as trenches and the peaks of mountains as the walls of the fortress; thus, it would be possible to feel secure and face the enemy from the other side. Secondly, the attack should be from one side or at the most from two because by distributing the entire force on several fronts, weakness would be inevitable. Thirdly, the scouts should be placed on the tops of high grounds and the peaks of mountains so that they may give a warning of any attack. Sometimes, it happens that instead of attacking from the expected side, the enemy attacks from a different one. Therefore, if posses are on high places, they will detect the enemy from the cloud of dust seen from a distance.

To clarify the useful aspect of these instructions, Ibn Abul-Hadid has recorded (in Vol. 15, p. 91) a historical incident that when Qahtabah (ibn Shabib at-Ta'i) camped in a village after leaving Khurasan, he and Khalid ibn Barmak went and sat on the top of a nearby hill. No sooner had they sat down than Khalid noticed flocks of deer coming running

from the forest. On seeing this he said to Qahtabah, “O Commander! Stand and announce to the army that they should at once fall in line and take up arms.” Hearing this, Qahtabah was startled. He stood up. Looking hither and thither, he said, “I do not see the enemy’s men anywhere.” He replied, “O Amir! This is not the time that should be lost in any conversation. You have seen how these deer are proceeding towards the people, leaving their abodes. This means that the enemy’s army is marching from the rear.” Consequently, the commander ordered his army to get ready. As soon as the army got ready, the noise of the horses’ hoofs was heard and within moments the enemy was on them. Since they had prepared themselves for defence in time, they defended themselves against the enemy thoroughly. Now, if Khalid had not been at such a height and had not acted with such sagacity, the enemy would have attacked them as they were unaware of the attack and annihilated them. Fourthly, the reconnaissance should be spread here and there, so that they can be aware of the movements and intentions of the enemy and thereby foil his plans. Fifthly, when the army camps, it should camp together, and when it moves, it should move together, so that the enemy does not attack you in a state of dispersal and overpowers you easily. Sixthly, at night, the guard should be formed by fixing spears in a circle in the ground so that if the enemy attacks during the night, it is possible to prepare for defense by taking up arms at once, and if the enemy showers arrows, that, too, can be dealt with. Seventhly, deep sleep should be avoided lest you should become unaware of the enemy’s approach and the latter would succeed in attacking you before you get ready.

Instruction 12

Given to Ma`qil Ibn Qays ar-Riyahi as He Was Dispatched to Syria at the Command of a Vanguard Contingent of Three Thousand Strong.

Fear Allah before Whom attendance is inevitable and with other than Whom there is no meeting. Do not fight except those who fight you. Travel in the two cool periods (i.e. morning and evening). Let the men have a midday sleep. March easily and do not travel during the early night for Allah has made it for resting and has ordained it for staying, not for journeying. Therefore, give rest to your body in the night and let your beasts of burden also rest. When you are sure that the morning has approached, and when dawn has drawn nigh, start your journey with Allah's blessings. If you face the enemy, stand in the midst of your comrades. Do not get too near to the enemy like one who wants to commence the fighting, nor should you remain too distant like one who is afraid of action, till you receive my orders. Hatred for them should not lead you to fight before inviting them (to guidance) and exhausting your pleas before them.

Letter 13

To Two Officers in His Army

I have placed Malik1 ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar in command over you and over all those under you. Therefore, follow his commands and take him as the armour and shield for yourselves because he is one of those from whom I have no fear of weakness nor any mistake, nor laziness where haste is more appropriate,nor haste where slackness is expected of him.

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent a vanguard contingent of twelve thousand strong under the command of Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi and Shurayh ibn Hani al-Harithi to Syria, on the way, near Sur ar-Rum, they encountered "Abul-Awar" Amr ibn Sulayman al-Salami who was camping there with a Syrian contingent. Both of them informed Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) of this through al-Harith ibn Jumhan al-Ju'fi, whereupon the Imam (ع) sent Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar as the Officer-in-Command and wrote this letter to notify them. The brief but comprehensive words in which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to Malik al-Ashtar in this letter gives an indication of his intelligence, sagacity, courage, daring, expanse and versatility in the art of war as well as his own personal greatness.

Iinstruction 14

To the Army Before the Encounter with the Enemy at Siffin

Do not fight them unless they start the fighting because, by the grace of Allah, you are right, and to leave them till they begin fighting will be another point from your side against them. If, by the will of Allāh, the enemy is defeated, do not kill those who flee away, do not strike a helpless person, do not finish off the wounded and do not inflict pain on women even though they may attack your honor with filthy words and abuse your officers because they are weak in character, mind and intelligence. We have been ordered to avoid them although they may be unbelievers. Even in pre-Islamic (jahiliyya) period, if a man struck a woman with a stone or a stick, he was rebuked along with his posterity after him..

The responsibility for the war and fighting that took place between Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and Mu`awiyah lies solely on Mu`awiyah because the latter brought about the war by laying the blame for Othman's blood on Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) erroneously, although the facts about the causes of Othman's killing and by whom he was killed were not unknown to Mu`awiyah. But since there was no way for him to achieve his objective save by creating an excuse for war, he started the war in order to retain his illegitimate authority. This evidently was offensive. It cannot by any means be considered as permissible because rebellion and rebellion against the rightful Imam is unlawful according to the general consensus of Muslims. Thus, "Abu Zakariyya" Yahya ibn Sharaf an-Nawawi (631/1233 - 676/1277) writes the following: "Do not fight those in authority with regard to matters of governing, nor should you raise objections against them except when you observe them committing things which you know are definitely against Islam. If you see them doing such things, regard it as bad for them and speak the truth wherever you may be. But rising against them or fighting them is prohibited by the consensus of Muslims (Sharh Sahih Muslim, Vol. 2, p. 125). In agreement with this view, see also: judge Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn at-Tayyib al-Baqillani [338/950 - 403/1013], the Ash`arite great scholar, in Al-Tamhid, p. 186, and Sa`d ad-Din Mas`ud ibn Umar at-Taftazani [712/1312 - 793/1390] in Sharh al-Maqasid, Vol. 2, p. 272.

Muhammad ibn `Abdul-Karīm al-Shahristani writes the following: "Whoever rises against the true Imam, according the unanimous view of the (Muslim) community, is known as a Kharijite,

deviator. The same is the case of rising, during the days of the companions, against the rightful imāms, or even after them against those who followed them in virtue (Al-Milal wal Nihal, Vol. 1, p. 114).

There is no doubt that the action of Mu`awiyah's was the result of his rebellion. To take up arms for the purpose of stopping the advance of the one who rebellions is not against any code of peace or against the conduct of peace-loving people. Rather, it is a natural right of the oppressed. And if one is deprived of this right, then there will remain no way to prevent oppression and tyranny or the safeguarding of rights in the world. This is why Allah has permitted taking up arms against rebels. Thus, Allah says the following: "And if two parties of the believers fall into a quarrel, restore peace between them both; but if one of the two transgresses against the other, (then) fight that which transgresses till it complies with the command of Allah. And if it complies, restore peace between the two with justice and deal justly; verily, Allah loves the just ones" (Holy Quran, 49: 9).

It was the first plea to which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) pointed out by saying, "By the Grace of Allah, you are right." But even after exhausting this plea, he prevented his army from taking the initiative to fight because he wished that the initiative should not be from his side and that he should take up the sword only in self-defense. Consequently, when all his effort for peace proved futile, and when the enemy took the first step towards war, this was the second argument in their own favor after which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) could not be blamed for getting fighting nor be accused of taking an aggressive action. It was rather an obligation to stop oppression and tyranny that he had to discharge and which Allah has permitted in clear words. Thus, Allah's command is that: "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not be aggressive for verily Allah does not love the aggressors" (Holy Quran, 2: 190).

Besides, fighting Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) meant fighting the Prophet (ص) according to the Prophet's saying: "O Ali! Your peace is my peace and your war is my war (Ibn al-Maghazlii, Al-Manaqib, p. 5; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 18, p. 24). Thus, whatever punishment should be imposed for fighting the Prophet (ص) should be for fighting Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). For him, whoever wages war against the Prophet (ص), Allah has laid down the same penalty.

To recompense those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive in the land, spreading mischief (therein), is only that they be slain or crucified or their hands and feet should be cut off from opposite sides or be banished from the land; This for them shall be the disgrace in this world and for them, in the hereafter, shall be a great torment. (Holy Quran, 5: 33)

Apart from this, the instructions that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) issued with regard to the war, namely that no runner-away nor the wounded should be assaulted, are so high from the moral point of view that they can be regarded as a sublime specimen of the moral values and high standards of the struggle to promote Islam. These instructions, then, were not simply confined to mere words. Rather, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) followed them to the letter, ordering others, too, to follow them strictly. He did not, on any occasion, tolerate the chasing of any runner-away, the attack against the helpless or to assault women. In fact, on the battlefield of the Jamal war, where the command of the opposite force was in the hands of a woman, he did not change his principle. After the defeat and the conquering of the foe, he proved his high character, sending Aisha to Medina under due protection. Had there been someone other than Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he would have proposed the same punishment as that which ought to be awarded for making such a step! Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written the following: "Had she [Aisha] done the same to (caliph) Umar as she had done to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), spreading rebellion against him among the people, and having the caliph secured victory over her, he would have killed her and cut her into pieces. But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was very forbearing and large-hearted" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 17, p. 254).

Invocation 15

By Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) When He Used to Face the Enemy.

O Lord! Hearts are drawn to You, necks are stretching (towards You), eyes are fixed (on You), steps are in motion and bodies have turned lean! O Lord! Hidden animosity has become manifest and the cauldrons of malice are boiling.

O Lord! We complain to You of the absence of our Prophet (ص), the numerousness of our enemy and the diffusion of our passions.

"Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth; You are the Best of those who decide" (Holy Quran, 7: 89).

Instruction 16

He Used to Issue this Instruction to His Followers During Battle Time.

The retreat after which return is intended and the withdrawal after which an attack is in view should not make you unhappy. Do justice with the swords (allow your swords to do their duties). Keep ready a place for the falling of bodies (of your foe); prepare yourselves for hurling strong spears and striking swords with full force, and keep your voices down as doing so keeps cowardice off.

By the One Who broke open the seed (for growth) and created living beings, they had not accepted Islam but had only secured safety (by verbally professing it), hiding their lack of faith. Consequently, when they found helpers for their lack of faith, they disclosed it.

Letter 17

In Reply to a Letter from Mu`awiyah.

As for your demand to me to (hand over) Syria, I cannot give you today what I denied you the day before. As regarding your statement that the war has eaten up Arabia save its last breath, you should know that those whose right has been eaten up will go to Paradise, whereas those who are wrong shall go to Hell. As for your equality in war and in (the numbers of) men, certainly you cannot be more penetrating in doubtfulness (of belief) than I am in certainty (of belief), and the people of Syria are not more greedy for this world than the people of Iraq are for the next one.

As for your saying that both of us are sons of Abd Manaf, it is undoubtedly so, but Umayyah cannot be like Hāshim, nor can Harb be like `Abdul-Muttalib, nor can Abu Sufyan be like Abu Talib. The muhajir (immigrant) cannot be a match for whoever was set free (when Mecca fell), nor can one of a pure descent be a match for one who is adopted, nor the pursuer of truth can be a match to the adherent to wrongdoing, nor can a believer be a match for a hypocrite... How bad are the successors who

go on following their predecessors who have already fallen into the fire of Hell!

Besides, we also have the distinction of Prophethood among us by virtue of which we subdued the strong and raised up the downtrodden. When Allah made Arabia enter (the fold of) His religion and when the [Arab] people submitted to it willingly or unwillingly, you were among those who entered the religion either out of greed or out of fear, at a time when those who had gone first had preceded and when the first Muhajirun had acquired their own distinction.

Now, do not give Satan have a share in you, nor should you let him have his sway over you, and that is an end of the matter.

During the battle of Siffin, Mu`awiyah again considered demanding the province of Syria from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and playing such a trick in order to succeed in his schemes. In this regard, he consulted Amr ibn al-As. But the latter did not agree with this idea and said, "O Mu`awiyah, think a little! What effect would this writing of yours have on Ali? How can he fall in this trap by your persuasion?" To this, Mu`awiyah said, "We are all descendants of `Abd Manaf. What difference is there between Ali and me that he may score over me and I may not succeed in deceiving him?" `Amr ibn al-As said, "If you think so, then write and see (the outcome)."

Mu`awiyah, therefore, wrote a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wherein he made a demand for Syria and also wrote the following: "We are descendants of Abd Manaf. There is no distinction for one over the other among us." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this letter in reply. He mentioned his own predecessors along with those of Mu`awiyah, expressing his rejection of the claim of such an equality. Although the origin of both was the same, and although the paternal chain of both joined at `Abd Manaf, the progeny of `Abd Shams was the source of all evil when it came to morality and character, involving itself in heresy and vice. Contrariwise, the house of Hashim was the one where Allah was worshiped as the only god and where there were no idols. If the branches growing out of the same root bear both flowers as well as thorns, then both cannot be deemed as equal. Consequently, it does not need any detailed explanation to argue that Umayyah and Hashim, Harb and Abdul-Muttalib, and Abu Sufyan and Abu Talib did not match each other from any angle whatever. This is not denied by any historian or biographer. In fact, after this reply, even Mu`awiyah did not dare to refute

it: After Abd Manaf, it was Hashim alone who possessed conspicuous prestige among the tribesmen of Quraish and the most important positions with relationship to the Ka`ba, namely the siqaya (i.e. providing water for the pilgrims) and rifada (making provisions for the pilgrims) was assigned to him. As such, during the time of hajj, one caravan after another used to come and stay with him. He was such a generous host to them that those who partook of his generosity and benevolence praised him for a long time thereafter.

The worthy son of this very large-hearted and courageous father was Abdul-Muttalib whose name was Shaybah and surname was "Sayyidul-Batha" (master of the Mecca Valley). He was the successor to the distinction of Abraham's line and owner of the greatness and mastership of Quraish. The high courage and far-sightedness demonstrated by him before Abraham is a shining star for the family of Abd Manaf. Abd Manaf was a pearl and Abdul-Muttalib was the luster of the pearl.

Abdul-Muttalib's son was Abu Talib whose lap served as the cradle for Abdullah's orphan child and as the place where the Prophet (ص) was raised. He raised the Prophet (ص) in his care, shielding him against his enemies. To compare Abu Sufyan, Harb and Umayyah with them or to regard them as their matches is the same as to close one's eyes to the luster of light and to regard it as darkness.

After recounting this genealogical difference, the next point of distinction which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) describes is that he himself is a muhajir (immigrant from Mecca) while Mu`awiyah is a taliq (i.e. one of those whose lives the Prophet [ص] had spared when Mecca fell to the Muslims). Therefore, when the Prophet (ص) entered Mecca victoriously, he inquired from the tribesmen of Quraish as to how they thought he would deal with them. All said that, being a generous son of a generous father, they expected only goodness from him, whereupon the Prophet (ص) said, "Go away, you have all been spared." That is, "You did deserve to be detained as slaves but, by obligation, you have been set free." These spared persons included Mu`awiyah and Abu Sufyan. Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid and Shaikh Muhammad Abdo have recorded the following note in their annotations to this letter: "Abu Sufyan and Mu`awiyah were both among the spared ones" (Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 17, p. 119; `Abdoh, Vol. 3, p. 17).

The third point of distinction is that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's lineage is pure and clear and there is no doubtful point anywhere in it. Contrariwise, Mu`awiyah has used to the word "taliq". Men of letters have given "taliq" this meaning: "One who is attributed to someone who is not his father". In this regard, the first doubt entertained about Umayyah is whether he was the son of Abd Shams or simply his slave who began to be known as his son because of having been brought up by him. Thus, allama al-Majlisi has related the following from Kamil al-Bahai: "Umayyah was a Byzantine slave of `Abd Shams. When the latter found him intelligent and sagacious, he freed him then adopted him as his son. The result was that he began to be called 'Umayyah son of `Abd Shams' as Zayd (ibn Harithah) was called 'Zayd ibn Muhammad (ص)' before a Quranic verse was revealed (prohibiting it)."

The second doubt in the Umayyad lineage is whether Harb, who is known as the son of Umayyah, was really his son or simply a slave brought up by him. In this regard, Ibn Abul-Hadid has quoted the following from Abul-Faraj al-Isbahani's bookt: "Mu`awiyah inquired from the lineage expert Daghfal (Ibn Hanzalah) whether he had seen Abdul-Muttalib. The genealogist replied in the affirmative. He further inquired how he found him, whereupon Daghfal replied, "He was prestigious, handsome and a man of a broad forehead, while his face bore the brightness of Prophethood. Then, Mu`awiyah inquired whether he had seen Umayyah ibn Abd Shams also and he replied that he had seen him, too. He inquired how he found him, so he replied, "Weak of body, bent stature and blind." In front of him was his slave Thakwan who led his life here and there. Mu`awiyah said it was his son Abu Amr (Harb), whereupon he said, "You say so but the tribesmen of Quraish only know that he was his slave" (Al-Aghani, Vol. 1, p. 12; Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 17, pp. 231-232).

In this regard, the third doubt is about Mu`awiyah himself. Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written that: "Mu`awiyah's mother, Hind, led a life of vileness and immorality." Az-Zamakhshari (Abul-Qasim Mahmud ibn Umar [467/1075 - 538/1144]) has written in his book Rabi' al-Abrar that Mu`awiyah's parentage was traced back to four persons who were: Musafir ibn Abu Amr, Omerah ibn al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah, al-Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib and as-Sabah (a singer for Omerah)" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 1, p. 336).

The fourth point of distinction is that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has stated that he was always the devotee of what is right while

Mu`awiyah was the devotee of wrongdoing. This fact needs no proof. The life of Mu`awiyah was spent in suppressing right and hankering after wrong. Nowhere is his step seen as advancing the cause of righteousness.

The fifth distinction is that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was a believer whereas Mu`awiyah was a mischief-monger and a hypocrite. Just as there can be no doubt about Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's belief, there can be no doubt about Mu`awiyah's mischief-mongering and hypocricy. Thus, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has exposed the man's hypocrisy in the earlier writing of these words.

These people had not accepted Islam but only secured safety by verbally professing it and had hidden their disbelief. Consequently, when they found helpers for their mischief, they disclosed it.

Letter 18

To Abdullah ibn Abbas, his Governor over Basra

You should know that Basra is the place where Satan descends and mischief takes place. Keep the people of this place pleased with good treatment and remove the knots of fear from their hearts.

I have come to know of your strictness and harshness with Banu Tamim[206]. Banu Tamim are such that if one star sets, another rises for them. They were never exceeded in (the art of) war in pre-Islamic times or after Islam. They have a special kinship with us and a particular

[206]When Talhah and az-Zubayr reached Basra, it was Banu Tamim who took active part in the movement to "avenge Othman's blood" and were in the vanguard of those who were fanning this mischief. Therefore, when `Abdullah ibn Abbas took over as the Governor of Basra, in view of their breach of faith and animosity, he thought they deserved to be treated harshly and was to some extent severe with them. But in this tribe there were also a few sincere followers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). When they saw this behavior of Ibn Abbas with their tribe, they sent a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) through Jariyah ibn Qadamah wherein they complained of Ibn Abbas's harsh treatment. Thereupon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this letter to Ibn Abbas in which he instructed him to change his ways and to treat them well, drawing his attention to the kinship between Banu Hashim and Banu Tamim. That kinship was this: Banu Hashim and Banu Tamim join the lineal line at Ilyas ibn Mudar because Hashim is the descendant of Mudrikah ibn Ilyas, while Tamim is the descendant of Tabikhah ibn Ilyas.

relationship. We shall be rewarded if we pay heed to the tie of kinship and be deemed sinful if we disregard it. O Abul-Abbas! May Allah have mercy on you! Keep yourself restrained in whatever you say or do, in anything good or bad relevant to your people, as we are both partners in this (responsibility). Prove yourself according to my good impressions about you, and do not prove my opinion (about you) to be wrong, and this is the end of the matter.

Letter 19

To One of His Officers

Now, the cultivators[207]

[dahaqin, plural of dihqan] of your city have complained of your strictness, hard- heartedness, humiliating treatment and harshness. I thought it over and found that since they are unbelievers, they cannot be brought near nor kept away nor treated severely because of the pledge with them. Behave with them in-between strictness and softness, and adopt for them a mingling or remoteness, aloofness with nearness, if Allah so pleases.

Letter 20

To Ziyad Ibn Abih[1],when Abdullah Ibn Abbas Was the Governor of Basra, the Suburbs of Ahwaz, Pars and Kirman, While Ziyad Was His Deputy in Basra.

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[207]These people were Magians (majus, Zoroastrian). This is why the treatment of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's officer of them was not the same as it was with Muslims. Disgusted with this [discrimination], they wrote a letter of complaint to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and spoke of the officer's harshness. In reply, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote to his officer that he should mete out treatment to them in which there should be neither harshness nor such leniency which they may exploit to creating mischief. This is so because if they are let loose, they get involved in schemes against the government, thus disturbing the country's administration by creating one mischief or another, while a wholly repressive policy cannot be justified because they are counted as subjects and their rights as such cannot be ignored.

[208]"Ibn Abih" means: "son of his [unknown] father".

I truthfully swear by Allah that if I come to know that you have misappropriated the funds of the Muslim, small or big amounts, I shall inflict upon you such punishment that would leave you empty-handed, heavy backed and humiliated, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 21

Also to Ziyad

Give up luxury and be moderate. Every day, remember the coming Day [of Judgment]. Hold back from the funds what you need and send forward the balance for the day of your need.

Do you expect that Allah may give you the reward of the humble while you yourself remain vain in His view? And do you covet that He may give you the reward of those practicing charity while you enjoy means of comfort, denying them to the weak and the widows? Certainly, a man is awarded according to his deeds. He shall meet what he has sent before, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 22

To Abdullah ibn Abbas. Abdullah ibn Abbas used to say, "Apart from the Prophet's statements, I did not derive a greater benefit from any other statement."

Let it be known to you that sometimes a man gets pleased with securing a thing which he was not going to miss at all and gets displeased at missing a thing which he would not in any case get. Your pleasure should be about what you secure with regard to your next life, and our grief for having lost you should be for what you miss in respect thereof. Do not be very much pleased with what you secure from this world, nor should you get extremely grieved over what you miss of it. Your worry should be about what is to come after death.

Will 23

Made Shortly Before His Death When He Had Been Fatally Wounded by a Blow from the Sword of (`Abd Ar-rahman) Ibn Muljim (The Curse of Allah Be Upon Him).

I enjoin you, as my dying wish, not to regard anything as a partner with Allah, not to disregard the Sunnah of Muhammad (ص). Establish these two pillars and light these two lamps. You will then be free from evil. Yesterday, I was your companion. Today, I am (just) a lesson for you, while tomorrow I shall be leaving you. If I survive, I shall be the master of my blood (to avenge or not to avenge it), and if I die, then death is a promised event. If I forgive, it is for me a means of nearness (to Allah) and for you a good deed. Therefore, do forgive. "What?! Do not you love that Allah should forgive you?" (Holy Quran, 24: 22).

By Allah! This sudden death is not an event that I dislike, nor is it an accident that I hate. I am just like a night traveller who reaches the spring (in the morning), or like or seeker who secures (his aim): "And whatever is with Allah is the best for the righteous" (Holy Quran, 3: 198).

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "A portion of this statement has already appeared in the sermons, but I found it necessary to record it again because of some additional matter."

Will 24

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Will Regarding How His Property Should Be Dealt With. He Wrote it upon His Return from Siffin.

This is what Ali ibn Abu Talib, the slave of Allah, has laid down about his property, seeking Allah's pleasure, so that He may, by its virtue, grant him entry into Paradise and accord him peace.

An excerpt from the same:

It will be administered by [my oldest son] Hassan ibn Ali (ع). He will take from it a suitable portion for his own livelihood while also spending of it on charity. If something happens to Hassan and Hussain (ع) survives him, he (Hussain [ع]) will administer it after Hassan and deal with it accordingly. In the charitable estate of the two sons of Fatima (ع), they have the same rights as all (other) sons of Ali. I have laid down the (functions of) administration of the two sons of Fatima (ع) in order to seek the pleasure of Allah and nearness to the Messenger of Allah (ص) with due regard for his honor and in consideration of his kinship [to them].

It is obligatory on him who administers it to retain the estate as it is and to spends the surplus as he has been required and instructed. He should not sell the seedlings in the plantations of these villages till the land changes its face by turning them into [fully grown] plants. As for those of my slave girls, if any of them has a child or is pregnant, she would be retained for the sake of the [birth of the] child and will partake of his share. If the child dies and she survives, then she is free; bondage is removed from her and emancipation is granted to her.[209]

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "In this will, in Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's phrase 'alla yabi'a min nakhliha wadiyyatan', the word wadiyyah means 'seedling of a date-palm', and its plural is wadiyy. And his words 'hatta tushkila arduha ghirasan' is one of the most eloquent form of expression, and it means that when a number of date plants grow on the land, then whoever had seen it before the growth will now regard it as a different land."

Instruction 25

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) used to write the following to whoever he appointed for the collection of zakat and charities. Al-Sharif says the following:

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[209]The life of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was that of a laborer or a cultivator, and he dug up a number of wells, too. He worked in agricultural fields belonging to other persons. He cultivated barren and untilled lands, providing means of irrigating to them, making them cultivable, and he planted orchards. Since these lands were entirely cultivated by him, they were his property, yet he never paid heed to property and, declaring them a trust, gave up his proprietorship. But in consideration of his kinship to the Prophet (ص), he assigned the management rights of this trust to Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (ع), one after the other. Yet he did not tolerate granting any additional rights for them but treated them both like other children of his, giving them merely the right to take from their inheritance only what was needed for their livelihood. The balance he ordered to be spent for the common good of the Muslims and for charitable purposes. Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following: "Everyone knows that in Medina, Yanbu' and Suwayqah, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had dug up several springs and brought under cultivation many barren and uncultivable lands. Yet, he gave up his rights of their possession, declaring them as trusts for the Muslims. When he left the world, nothing remained behind him as his property" (*Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 15, p. 146).

"We have recorded a few portions of it here to show that he always erected the pillars of right and created examples of justice in all matters, small or big, delicate or serious."

Move on with the fear of Allah Who is One and has no partner. Do not frighten any Muslim. Do not pass over anyone's land so as to make him feel unhappy. Do not take from him more than Allah's share in his property. When you go to a tribe, you should get down at its watering place instead of entering their houses. Then proceed towards them with peace and dignity till you stand among them. Salute them and do not be negligent in greeting them. After that, say to them, "O servants of Allah! The vicegerent of Allah and His caliph has sent me to you to collect from you Allah's share of your properties. Is there anything of His share in your properties? If so, give it to His vicegerent."

If someone among them says, "No," then do not repeat the demand. If someone speaks to you in the affirmative, go with him without frightening him, threatening him, pressuring him or oppressing him. Take what he gives you, such as gold or silver (coins). If he has cattle or camels, do not enter upon them save with his permission because their major part is his. When you get there, do not enter upon them like one who has full control over them or in any violent manner whatsoever. Do not scare any animal. Do not tease anyone, and do not let the owner feel grieved over anything.

Divide the property into two parts and let the owner choose one. Once he has chosen, do not object to it. Then divide the remaining into two parts and let him choose one. Once he has chosen, do not raise any objection. Continue like this till only that much remains which is enough to satisfy Allah's dues. Then take Allah's due from it. If he contends your action, allow his views to prevail, then mix the two (separated) parts and repeat what you had done before till you take Allah's due from his property. Do not take any old, decrepit, broken-limbed, sick or unsound animal. Do not entrust the animals except to one whom you trust to take care of Muslims' property till he hands it over to their chief who will distribute it. Do not entrust it to anyone except to whoever is a well wisher, God-fearing, trustworthy and watchful, to one who is not harsh with regard to Muslims' property. Nor should you make them run too much, nor should you expose them to exhaustion, nor should you over-work them. Then send us all that you have collected. We shall deal with it as Allah has ordered.

When your trustee takes over (the animal), tell him that he should not separate the she-camel from its young and should not milk all its milk because that will affect its young. Also, he should not exert it in riding. In this matter, he should deal justly with it and with all its companions. He should give rest to the [tired] camels and drive with ease those whose hoofs have been rubbed off. When you pass a water spring, keep the camels there to drink and do not take them away from a vegetated land to barren paths. He should allow them rest now then and give them time near the water and the grass. In this way, when they reach us by leave of Allah, they will be fat with plenty of marrow and will not be fatigued or distressed. We will then distribute them according to the (commands of) the Books of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ص). Certainly, this will be a great source of reward for you and a means to secure guidance, if Allah so wills.

Instruction 26

Given to One of His Officers Whom He Sent for the Collection of Zakat and Charities.

He (Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع]) ordered him to fear Allah in his secret matters and hidden actions, where there is no witness except the One and only Who watches over all. He also orders him that whatever he does in obedience to Allah openly should not be different from what he does secretly. Anyone whose hidden attitude is not different from his open one and whose action is not different from his words has discharged his obligation and his adoration is pure.

He also ordered him that he should not harass the public. He should not be harsh to them and should not turn away from them because of the superiority of his official status over them because they are all brethren in faith and assist in the recovery of taxes:

Certainly, you have a fixed share and a known right in this levy, and there are others who are poor, weak and starving. We shall discharge your rights. So, you should [first] discharge their rights. If you do not do so, you will have the largest number of enemies on the Day of Judgement. How wretched is the man whose enemies in the view of Allah are theneedy, the destitute, the beggars, the turned away, the indebted and the (penniless) travellers?! Whoever treats the trust lightly, indulges in treachery and does not keep himself and his faith untarnished by it has certainly secured humiliation in this world while his humiliation and

disgrace in the next world will be much greater. Surely, the greatest treachery is the treachery against the Muslim community, and the most ugly deceit is deceiving the Muslim leaders, and that is the end of the matter.

Instruction 27

Given to Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr (May Allah Be Pleased with Him), When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Appointed Him as Governor of Egypt:

Deal humbly with the public. Remain lenient. Meet them large-heartedly, accord them equal treatment so that the mighty should not expect injustice from you in their favor and the lowly should not be despondent of your justice. Allah, the Sublime, will certainly question you, O community of His creatures, about your actions, small or big, open or concealed. If He punishes you, it is because you have been oppressive, and if He forgives you, then it is because He is the most Generous.

Be informed, O servants of Allah, that the God-fearing share the joys of this transient world as well as those of the next, for they share with the people of this world in their worldly matters while their people did not share with them in the matters of the next. They lived in this world in the best manner of living. They ate the choicest food and enjoyed herein all that the people with ease of life enjoyed. They secured from it what the haughty and the vain secured. Then they departed from it after taking provision enough to take them to the end of their journey, having contracted a profitable transaction. They tasted the pleasure of renouncing the life in this world, firmly believing that on the Coming Day, they will be neighbors of Allah, where their call will not be repulsed, nor will their share of pleasure be small.

O servants of Allah! Fear death and its measures, and prepare all that is needed for it. It will come as a big event and a great affair, either as something good in which there will never be any evil, or an evil one in which there will never be any good. Who is nearer to Paradise than one who works towards it, and who is nearer to Hell than one who works for it? You are being chased by death. If you stop, it will catch you, and if you run away from it, it will grab you. It is more attached to you than your own shadow. Death is tied to your forelocks while the world is being wrapped up from behind you. Therefore, fear the Fire whose hollow is deep, whose flames are severe and whose punishment is novel. It is a

place wherein there is no mercy. No call is heard in it. No pain is healed in it. If it is possible for you to have severe fear of Allah and to rest hope in Him, then do both these things because every individual can have hope in His Lord to the extent of his fear of His Lord. Certainly, the most hopeful person with Allah is whoever fears Him the most.

O Muhammad son of Abu Bakr! Be informed that I have given you charge of Egypt which is my biggest force. You are duty-bound to oppose your passions and to serve as a shield against your religion even though you may get only an hour in the world. Do not enrage Allah for pleasing others because (Allah) is such that He may take the place of others, yet others cannot take the place of Allah. Say prayers at their appointed times. Do not say your prayers earlier for the sake of (available) leisure, nor should you delay them on account of any preoccupation. Remember that every deed of yours is dependent on your prayers.

An excerpt of the same:

The leader of guidance and the leader of destruction cannot be equal, nor can the friend of the Prophet (ص) and the enemy of the Prophet (ص). The Messenger of Allah (ص) has told me that: "With regard to my people, I am afraid neither of a believer nor of an unbeliever. As for the believer, Allah will afford him protection because of his belief. As for the unbeliever, Allah will humiliate him because of his lack of belief. But I fear for anyone of you who is hypocrite in his heart and who has mastered the language. He speaks what you hold as good but does whatever you dislike.

Letter 28

In Reply to Mu`awiyah, One of His Most Elegant Writings:

Now, your letter has reached me wherein you recall that Allah chose Muhammad (ص) for His religion and helped him through those companions who assisted him. Strange things about you have remained concealed (by theirony of fate) from us, since you have started telling us of Allah's trials for us and His bounties through [the kinship to] our Prophet (ص). In this regard, you are like one who carries dates to Hajar, or who challenges his own master to a duel in archery.

You think that so-and-so are the most distinguished persons in Islam. You have said such a thing with which, were it true, you have nothing to do, but if it is not so, then the defect in it will not affect you. And what are you going to do with the question of who is better and who is worse, or who is the ruler and who is the ruled? What do the freed ones and their sons have to do with distinguishing between the first Muhajirun and determining their status or defining their ranks? What a pity! The sound of an arrow is being produced by what is not a real arrow, and he against whom the judgement is to be passed is seated to judge! O mankind! Why do you not see your own lameness and thus remain within the bounds, and why do you not realize the shortness of your measure and stay back where destiny has placed you?! You have no concern with the defeat of the defeated or with the victory of the victor.

You are wandering in bewilderment, straying from the right path. Do you not realize it? I am not giving you any news: I am just recounting Allah's bounty, namely that a number of people from among the Muhajirun (immigrants from Mecca) and the Ansar (helpers) fell as martyrs in the way of Allah the Sublime and that each of them is distinguished (on that account). But when one of us secures martyrdom, he is named the chief of martyrs, and the Messenger of Allah grants him the special honor of saying seventy takbir (Allahu Akbar) during his funeral prayer. Do you not know that a number of people lost their hands in the way of Allah and that everyone is distinguished (on that account)? But when the same thing takes place to one of us [such as Ja'fer al-Tayyār], he is given the title "the flier in Paradise" and "the two-winged one"? Had not Allah forbidden self-praise, the writer would have mentioned numerous distinctions which the believer knows fully well and which the ears of the listeners do not wish to forget.

Better leave those whose arrows miss themark. We [Ahl al-Bayt (ع)] are the direct recipients of our Lord's favors while others receive favors from us after that. In spite of our established honor and well-known superiority over people, we did not stay away from mingling with you, intermarrying with you like equals although you are not so. And how could you be so when (our status is that) among us is the Prophet (ص) while among you is his opponent, among us is the lion of Allah while among you is the lion of the opposing groups, among us are the two masters of the youths of Paradise while among you are the children of Hell, among us is the choicest of all the women of the worlds while among you is the bearer of firewood, any many more distinctions on our side while shortcomings [abound] on yours?!

Our Islam is well-known and our (greatness in the) pre-Islamic period too cannot be denied. Whatever remains has been mentioned in the words of Allah, the most Glorified One, the Sublime: "... blood relatives have the better claim with regard to one another according to the Book of Allah" (Holy Quran, 33: 6).

He (Allah) the Sublime, also says the following: "Verily, of men the nearest to Abraham are surely those who followed him and this Prophet (Muhammad [ص]) and those who believe, and verily, Allah, is the Guardian of the faithful" (Holy Quran, 3: 68).

Thus, we are superior firstly because of kinship and, secondly, because of obedience [of the Almighty]. At the saqifa (of Banu Sa'idah), the Muhajirun contended kinship with the Messenger of Allah against the Ansar, scoring over them. If that success was based on kinship, then the right will be ours better than yours; otherwise, the Ansar's contention stands.

You think that I have been jealous of every caliph and have revolted against them all. Even if this is so, it is not an offence against you and, therefore, I owe you no explanation. This is a matter for which no blame comes to you.

You have said that I was dragged like a camel with a nose string to swear the oath of allegiance (to Abu Bakr). By the Eternal One (Allah), you had intended to revile me, but you have instead praised me, and you intended to humiliate me but have your own selves been humiliated. What humiliation does it mean for a Muslim to be the victim of oppression so long as he does not entertain any doubt in his religion, nor any misgiving in his firm belief?! This argument of mine is intended for others, but I have stated it to you only in so far as it is appropriate.

Then you recalled my status vis-a-vis Othman. In this regard, an answer is due to you because of your own kinship to him. So (now tell me), which of us was more inimical to Othman and who did more to bring about his killing?! Who offered him his support and made him sit down, stopping him? Whose help was solicited but turned his face away from the solicitor, drawing his[Othman's] death near till his fate overtook him? No, no; by Allah.

"Indeed, Allah knows those who hinder others from among you and those who say to their brethren: 'Come here to us' and they do not go to fight but a little" (Holy Quran, 33: 18).

I am not going to offer my excuse for reproaching him [Othman] for (some of) his innovations, for if my good counsel and guidance to him was [considered by you as] a sin, then very often a person who is blamed is no sinner at all, and sometimes the only reward a counselor reaps is suspicion (of being an evildoer). I desired naught but reform whatever I am able to (reform). "My guidance is only with Allah; On Him (alone) do I rely and to Him (alone) do I turn" (Holy Quran, 11: 88).

You have mentioned that for me and for my followers you have only the sword... This makes even a weeping person laugh. Did you ever see the descendants of `Abdul-Muttalib running away from battle, or being frightened by swords?! "Wait a little till Hamal joins the battle shortly."[210] And my sword appeased me by killing Hudhayfah. Then whoever you are seeking will seek you, and whoever you think to be far away will approach you. I am (shortly) speeding towards you with a force of Muhajirūn and Ansar and those who follow them in virtue. Their number will be great and their dust will spread all around. They will be wearing their shrouds, and their most coveted desire is to meet Allah. They will be accompanied by the descendants of those who took part in the battle of Badr. They will have Hāshemite swords whose splitting you have already seen in the case of your brother, maternal uncle, grandfather and kinsmen. "... nor are they far distant from the unjust ones" (Holy Quran, 11: 83).

This letter of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib is in reply to Mu`awiyah's letter which he sent to Kufa through Abu Umamah al-Bahili. It also contains replies to some points which Mu`awiyah had raised in his letter sent through Abu Muslim al-Khawlani.

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[210] This line is a poetic reference to one Hamal ibn Badr. The full couplet runs thus:

Wait a little bit till Hamal reaches the battlefield;
How pretty death is when it comes!

The story behind it is that Malik ibn Zuhayr threatened Hamal ibn Badr with battle and in reply the latter recited this couplet then attacked Malik and killed him. When Malik's brother saw this, he killed Hamal and his brother Hudhayfah in revenge. Then he described this incident in the following couplet:

I appeased my heart by killing Hamal ibn Badr

In Ibn Abu Umamah's letter, Mu`awiyah had mentioned the deputation of the Prophet (ص) and his ascension to revelation and wrote in such a manner as though it was a matter not known to or not understood by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and that he was in need of being informed of it. This is just like a stranger who may draw the map of a house for the guidance of those who dwell in it and apprize them of things already known to them. This is why Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has compared him to the man who carried dates to Hajar which was itself noted for abundant growth of dates.

This is a proverb employed when someone begins to tell a person matters which he already knows better. The basis of this proverb is that a man of Hajar, which is a town near Bahrain (in the Persian Gulf), went to Basra to sell goods and make purchases. Having finished the sale, he looked about the market to make his purchases and found nothing cheaper than dates. He, therefore, decided to purchase dates. When he reached Hajar with his load of dates, their plentitude and cheap price there did not leave him any alternative but to store them so as to sell them later when their price would rise. The price, however, continued to decline day after day till all the dates became rotten. This left him nothing except their stones. In short, after making a reference to the Prophet's ascension to Prophethood, Mu`awiyah recounted the distinction and merits of the three caliphs according to his view and wrote the following:

"The most distinguished among the companions and the most high ranking in the view of the Muslims was the first caliph who gathered all the Muslims under one voice, removed their disunity and fought those who were forsaking Islam. After him is the second caliph who won victories, founded cities and humiliated the unbelievers. Then came the third caliph who was the victim of oppression. He propagated religion and spread the word of Allah far and wide" (Siffin, al-Minqari, pp. 86-87; Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, pp. 334-335; Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 15, p. 186).

Mu`awiyah's purpose behind bringing up this pointless warbling was to injure Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's feelings and to rouse his temper so as to make him produce such words through his tongue or pen which would so disparage the caliphs and so that he would instigate the people of Syria and Iraq against him by exploiting them. In fact, he had already set it in the minds of these people that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had instigated the people against Othman, had got Talhah and az-Zubayr killed, had turned Aisha out of her house and shed the blood of thousands of Muslims. Being unaware of the real facts, they were convinced of these

baseless allegations, yet to strengthen the opposition, Mu`awiyah thought it advisable to make them believe that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did not recognize the achievements of the three caliphs and bore enmity and malice towards them to produce Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's writing as testimony and to use it for rousing the people of Iraq because their majority was much impressed with the environment created by the caliphs and with their greatness. But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) realized his intention and gave him such a reply which put a knot in his tongue. So, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) exposed the man's lowliness by referring to his enmity to Islam and to his acceptance of subjugation under force, advising him to stay within his own bounds, warning him against fixing grades of distinction among those Muhajirun who were in any case superior to him in so far as they had been in the vanguard of those who participated in the hijra (migration from Mecca to Medīna), whereas since then, Mu`awiyah himself was only one of those whose life had been spared (on the day when Mecca fell in the hands of the Muslims), he did not have the most remote respect among the Muhajirūn. Consequently, in the matter under discussion, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had put Mu`awiyah's status as that of a false arrow among real arrows. This is a proverb which is employed when a man boasts over persons among whom he enjoys no regard. As regarding his statement that so-and-so is greater in distinction, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has, by using the phrase "you think", shown that it is his personal opinion which does not have the most remote regard to the truth because this word is used when a false or an unreal statement is made.

Having refuted this claim of being the most distinguished, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to these qualities and distinctions of Banu Hashim which conspicuously demonstrate the high degree of their achievements. Thus, the people who took part in jihad with the Prophet (ص) and secured martyrdom attained high positions, but the distinction that fell to Hamzah by virtue of his high performance was not secured by anyone else. The Prophet (ص) gave him the title of "master of the martyrs" and performed his funeral prayer fourteen times, thus raising the number of takbirs (Allahu Akbar) rose to seventy. Similarly, in various battles, the hands of the fighters were cut off. For example, in the battle of Badr, the hands of Khubayb ibn Isaf al-Ansari and Mu'ath ibn Jabal, and in the battle of Uhud, those of `Amr ibn al-Jamuh as-Salami and `Ubayd (Atik) ibn at-Tayyihan (brother of Abul-Haytham at-Tayyihan) were cut off. But when, in the battle of Mu'tah, the hands of Ja`far ibn Abu Talib

were cut off, the Prophet (ص) singled him out by naming him "the flier in Paradise" and the "two-winged" resident of Paradise.

Having recounted the particular achievements of Banu Hashim, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to his own attainments with which the books of chronicles and traditions are replete and which could not be tarnished with doubts and misgivings. Thus, traditionists like Ahmed ibn Hanbal(164/780 - 241/855), Ahmed ibn Ali an Nisā'i (215/830 - 303/915) and others say that: "The number of traditions which have been related through reliable sources with regard to the distinctions of Ali ibn Abū Talib have not been related about any other companion of the Prophet (ص)" (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 107; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1115; Tabaqāt al-Hanabilah, Vol. 1, p. 319; Al-Kamil, Vol. 3, p. 399; Tahthab al-Tahthib, Vol. 7, p. 339; Fath al-Bari, Vol. 7, p. 57).

An important distinction out of these particular distinctions of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) is the one to which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers in these words: "We are the direct recipients of Allah's favors while others receive favors from us." This is the height of distinction that even the highest personality cannot reach its sublimity on its own, and every other distinction looks small before it. Acknowledging the greatness and supremacy of this sentence, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) intends to convey that we [Ahl al-Bayt (ع)] are not obligated to any person since Allah has bestowed all blessings on us directly, there being no intermediary between us and Allah, while all other people are under our obligation and protection, being the intermediary between them and Allah, the Glorified One. This is a high status indeed. Its apparent meaning is what the words show but its real sense is that Ahl al-Bayt (ع) are the obedient servants of Allah and the people must be their obedient followers" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 15, p. 194).

Now, since these people are the first recipients of the bounties of Allah and the source of bounties for the rest of the people, no one from among the people can be compared with them, nor can anyone be regarded as their equal on the basis of social contacts with them, much less than those individuals who were in direct contrast to the attainments and to the characteristics of these people and who used to oppose the truth and anything right on every occasion. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) places both sides of the picture before Mu`awiyah and says the following: 'The Prophet (ص) was one of us, while your father, Abu Sufyan, was among

the foremost in opposing him. Hamzah was one of us, and the Prophet (ص) gave him the title of Lion of Allah, while your maternal grandfather, Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, was proud of being the lion of swearers (against the Prophet [ص])'".

When, in the battle of Badr, Hamzah and Utbah ibn Rabi`ah came to face each other, Hamzah said, "I am Hamzah son of Abdul-Muttalib; I am the lion of Allah and the lion of His Prophet (ص)", whereupon `Utbah said, "I am the lion of swearers (against the Prophet [ص])". In another version, the word "asadul-ahlaf" is recorded. The meaning is that he was the chief of the allied parties.

The story of swearing is that when Banu Abd Manaf acquired a distinct status among the Arab tribes, they thought they should take over from Banu Abdid-Dar the offices relevant to the Ka`ba and to strip them off these offices. In this regard, Banu Abd Manaf made alliances with themselves and with these tribes: Banu Asad ibn Abdil-Uzza, Banu Taym, Banu Zuhrah and Banu al-Harith. They concluded an agreement with all of them. In order to solemnize this agreement, they drenched their hands in teeb (perfume) and swore that they would help each other to death. For this reason, these tribes were called: "tribes of sworn chaste parties". On the other side, the tribes of Banu Abdid-Dar, Banu Makhzum, Banu Sahm and Banu Adiy also swore that they would resist Banu Abd Manaf and their allies. These tribes are called simply the allies. `Utbah has deemed himself the head of the allied parties. Some commentators have taken the word "sadul-ahlaf" to imply Abu Sufyan because he made different tribes swear against the Prophet (ص) in the battle of the Trench (Khandaq), while some commentators take it to mean Asad ibn Abdil-Uzzah. But the latter interpretation does not carry any weight because here Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is addressing Mu`awiyah and this interpretation does not hit Mu`awiyah since Banu Abd Manaf were a party to this alliance. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says, "They have among themselves the masters of the youths of Paradise, referring to the Prophet's saying, al-Hassan and al-Hussain are the masters of the youths of Paradise, while the youths of the other party are in Hell'. This reference is to the sons of Uqbah ibn Abu Mu'eet to whom the Prophet (ص) once said, 'For you and your sons is Hell'. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says that among them is the chief of all the women of the worlds, namely Fatima az-Zahra (ع), while in the other party is the bearer of the wood, namely Umm Jamil, sister of Abu Sufyan. This woman used to throw thorns in the path of the Prophet (ص). She has

been referred to in the Holy Quran, along with Abu Lahab, in these words:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

"May both the hands of Abu Lahab perish, and may he perish, too. His wealth will not avail him aught nor what he earns. Soon shall he burn in the flaming Fire. And his wife is the bearer of the firewood. Upon her neck shall be a halter of twisted rope" (Holy Quran, 111: 1-5).

It is narrated from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Umar ibn al-Khattab, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abu Hurayra and others that the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following: "Verily, Fatima (ع) is the Supreme Lady of the women of Paradise, and al-Hassan and al-Hussain are the two Supreme Youths of Paradise. But their father (Ali) is Superior to them" (Al-Jamias-Sahih, al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 5, pp. 656, 661; Al-Musnad, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 3, pp. 3, 62, 64, 82; Vol. 5, pp. 391, 392; Al-Sunan, Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, p. 56; Al-Mustadrak, al-Hakim, Vol. 3, p. 167; Majma'az-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, pp. 183, 184, 201; Kanz al-Ummal, al-Muttaqi, Vol. 13, pp. 127, 128; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 4, p. 1895; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 5, p. 574; Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 1, p. 140; Vol. 6, p. 372; Vol. 10, p. 230; Tarikh, Ibn Asakir, Vol. 7, p. 365).

It is also narrated from Imran ibn al-Hussain and Abu Tha'labah al-Khushni that the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following to Fatima (ع): "O my daughter! Are you not satisfied that you are verily the Supreme Lady of all women of the worlds?" She said, "O father! Then what about Maryam (Mary) daughter of Imran?" He said, "She was the Supreme Lady of her time while you are the Supreme Lady of all ages. Truly, by Allah, I married you off to one who is a master in this world and in the hereafter. No one hates him save a hypocrite" (Hilyat al-Awliya', Vol. 2, p. 92; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 4, p. 1895; Al-Isaba, Vol. 4, p. 275).

Also, Aisha narrated that the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following: "O Fatima (ع)! Will you not be satisfied to be the Supreme Lady of the women of the worlds (or) the Supreme Lady of all women of this umma (community) or of the women believers?" (al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 8, p. 79; Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 7, pp. 142-144; Ibn Majah, Al-Sunan, Vol. 1, p. 518; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, Vol. 6, p. 282; al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak Ala Sahihayn, Vol. 3, p. 156).

The person who goes too far in counselling others will be thought to have his personal ends in so doing, even though his counsel may well be based on sincerity of intention and selflessness. A poetic couplet runs as follows:

How often a good counsel did I offer you, but sometimes
The only reward a counsellor reaps is suspicion.

Letter 29

To the people of Basra

Whatever disunity and schism you have is not hidden from you. I have forgiven your wrongdoers and I have held back my sword from those who ran away. I received everyone who came to me from among you. If devastating matters and wrong and silly views are prompting you to break the pledge to me and to oppose me, then listen! I have readied and saddled my horses, and if you force me to advance towards you, I shall come down in such a manner that before it the Battle of Jamal will appear like the last licking of the tongue. At the same time, I know the high status of the obedient among you and the right of the sincere ones without confusing the sinless with the offenders of the faithful with the pledge-breakers.

Letter 30

To Mu`awiyah

Fear Allah regarding what you have amassed and find out your true right turn to understand, for you will not be excused on the grounds of ignorance. Certainly, for (following the path of) obedience there are clear signs, shining ways, straight highways and a fixed aim. The shrewd proceed towards them while the mean ones turn away from them. Whoever turns his face from them deviates from righteousness and gropes in bewilderment. Allah takes away His bounty from him and afflicts him with His chastisement. Therefore, beware of your own selves. Allah has already shown you your way and the end where your affairs will terminate. You are speeding towards the aim of loss and the status of unbelief. Your ego has pushed you towards evil, thrown you into misguidance and conveyed you to destruction, placing obstacles in your way.

Commandment 31

He Wrote it for His Son al-Hassan ibn Ali (ع)[1] When He Camped at Al-hadirin on His Way Back from Siffin:

From the father who is (shortly) to die, who acknowledges the hardships of times, who has turned away from life, who has submitted himself to the (calamities of) time, who realizes the evils of the world, who is living in the abodes of the dead and is due to depart from them any day... to the son who yearns for what is not to be achieved, who is treading the path of those who have died, who is the victim of ailments, who is entangled in the (worries of the) days, who is a target of hardships, a slave of the world, a trader of its deception, a debtor of wishes, a prisoner of morality, an ally of worries, a neighbor of griefs, a victim of distresses who has been overpowered by desires and a successor of the dead.

Now (you should know that) what I have learned from the turning away of this world from me, the onslaught of time over me and the advancing of the next world towards me is enough to prevent me from remembering anyone except my soul and from thinking beyond myself. But when I confined myself to my own worries, leaving aside the worries of others, my intelligence saved me and protected me from my own desires. It clarified to me my affairs and led me to seriousness wherein there was no trickery and truth which was not tarnished by falsehood. Here, I found you a part of myself, rather I found you my whole, so much so that if anything befell you, it was as though it befell me, and if death came to you, it was as though it came to me. Consequently, your affairs meant to me what my own matters meant to me. So, I have written this piece of advice (to you) as an instrument of seeking help, whether I remain alive or cease to exist.

I admonish you to fear Allah, O my child, to abide by His commands, to fill your heart with His remembrance and to cling to hope from Him. No regard is more reliable than the regard between you and Allah provided you take hold of it. Enliven your heart with preaching, kill it by renunciation, energize it with firm belief, enlighten it with wisdom, humiliate it by recalling death, make it believe in mortality, make it see the misfortunes of this world, make it fear the authority of the time and the severity of some changes during the nights and the days. Place before it the events of past peoples, recall to it what befell those who were before you and walk among their cities and ruins, then see what they did and from what they have gone away, where they have gone and stayed. You will find that they departed from (their) friends and remained in loneliness. Shortly, you, too, will be like one of them. Therefore, plan for your place of stay and do not sell your next life for this one.

Give up discussing what you do not know and speaking about what does not concern you. Keep off the track from which you fear to go astray because refraining (from moving) when there is fear of straying is better than embarking on dangers. Ask others to do good; you will thus be among the doers of goodness. Discourage others from evil deeds with your own actions as well as speech and keep off, to the best of your ability, from whoever commits it. Struggle for Allah as is His due, and the reviling of a reviler should not deter you in matters relevant to Allah. Leap into dangers for the sake of what is right wherever it may be. Acquire insight into religious law. Habituate yourself to endure hardships since the best trait of character is endurance in matters of righteousness. In all your affairs, resign yourself to your Lord because you will thus be resigning yourself to a secure shelter and a strong protector. You should ask only from your Lord because in His hand is all the giving and depriving. Seek goodness (from Allah) as much as you can. Understand my advice and do not turn away from it because the best saying is that which benefits. Be informed that there is no good in that knowledge which is futile, and if knowledge is not implemented, then its acquisition is not justified.

O my child! When I noticed that I was of goodly age and noticed that I was increasing in weakness, I hastened with regard to my will to you and wrote down salient points lest death should overtook me before I divulged to you what I have in my heart, or lest my wit should be affected just as my body has been, or the forces of passions or the mischiefs of the world overtake you making you like a stubborn camel. Certainly, the heart of a young man is like an uncultivated land. It accepts whatever is strewn on it. So, I hastened to mold you properly before your heart

hardened and your mind became occupied, so that you might be ready to accept through your intelligence the results of the experience of others and be saved from going through these experiences yourself. In this way, you will avoid the hardship of seeking them and the difficulties of experimenting. Thus, you are getting to know what we had experienced and even those things are becoming clear to you which we might have missed.

O my child! Even though I have not reached the age which those before me have, yet I looked into their behavior and thought over events of their lives. I walked among their ruins till I was like one of them. In fact, by virtue of their affairs that have become known to me, it is as though I have lived with them from the very first to the very last. I have, therefore, been able to discern the impure from the clean and benefit from harm.

I have selected for you the choicest of those matters and collected for you their good points and have kept away from you their useless points. Since I feel for your affairs as a living father should, I aim at giving you guidance. I thought it should be at a time when you are advancing in age and new to the state of the world, possessing upright intention and a clean heart and that I should, being with the teaching of the Book of Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, and its interpretation, the laws and commandments of Islam, its lawful matters and unlawful ones and that I should not go beyond these for you. Then I feared lest you should get confused as other people had been confused on account of their passions and (different) views. Therefore, in spite of disliking the thought of warning you, I thought it better for me to make this issue strong rather than leave you in a status where I do not regard you safe from falling into destruction. I hoped that Allah will help you in your straightforwardness and guide you in your resoluteness. Consequently, I wrote this piece of my will for you.

Be informed, O my child, that what I love the most for you is that you adopt my will to fear Allah, to confine yourself to what Allah has made obligatory on you, to follow the actions of your forefathers and the virtuous people of your household. These did not fall short in seeing for themselves what you will see for yourself, and they did about their affairs as you will like to think (about your own affairs). Thereafter, their thinking led them to discharge the obligations which they came to know and to desist from what they were not required to do. If your heart does not accept this without acquiring knowledge as they acquired it, then your search should first be by way of understanding and learning, not by falling into doubts or getting entangled in quarrels.

Before you probe into this, you should begin by seeking your Lord's help, turning to Him for competence and keeping aloof from everything that throws you into doubt or flings you towards misguidance. When you have made sure that your heart is clean and humble and your thoughts have come together, and once you have only a reflection about this matter..., it is then that you will see what I have explained to you. If you have not been able to achieve that peace of observation and thinking which you will like to have, then be informed that you are only stamping the ground like a blind she-camel and falling into darkness while a seeker of religion should not grope in the dark, nor should he create confusion. It is better to avoid this.

Appreciate my advice, O my child, and be admonished that Whoever is the master of death is also the master of life, that the Creator causes death as well as gives life, that Whoever destroys is also the restorer of life, and that Whoever inflicts disease is also the one Who cures. This world continues in the way which Allah has made it with regard to its pleasures, trials, rewards on the Day of Judgement and all that He wishes and you do not know. If anything of this advice is not understood by you then attribute it to your ignorance of it because when you were first born, you were born ignorant. Thereafter, you acquired knowledge. There are many masters of whom you are ignorant. There are many issues regarding which your sight first wonders and your eye wonders then, after this, you shall see them as they are. Therefore, cling to the One Who created you, Who fed you and put you in order. Your worship should be for Him, your eagerness should be towards Him and your fear should be of Him.

Be informed, O my child, that no one received messages from Allah, the Glorified One, as the Prophet (ص) did. Therefore, regard him as your guide and leader towards salvation. Certainly, I shall spare no effort in giving you advice, and surely even if you try, you cannot acquire such insight for your welfare as I have for you.

Be informed, O my child, that if there had been a partner with your Lord, his [alleged partner's] messengers, too, should have come to you and you would have seen signs of his authority and power; you should have known his deeds and qualities. But He is only One god, Allah, and He has described Himself. No one can dispute with Him regarding His authority. He is from eternity and will remain for eternity. He is before all things without any beginning. He will remain after all things without an end. He is far too great to have His divinity proved by any encompassing heart or by any vision. Once you have understood this,

you should do what is done by him who is like you by way of his low status, his lack of authority, his increasing incapability and his great need for his Lord so as to seek His obedience. Fear His chastisement and be forewarned of His wrath because He does not command you save to be virtuous; He does not refrain you save from evil.

O my child! I have informed you about the world, its condition, its decay and its passing away, and I have informed you of the next world and of what has been provided in it for its people. I have recounted to you parables about it so that you may draw instruction from them and depend upon them. The example of those who have understood the world is like those travelers who, being fed-up with drought-stricken places, set off for greenery and a fruitful place. Then they endure difficulties on the way, separation from friends, hardships of the journey and unwholesome food in order to reach their fields of plenty and places of stay. Consequently, they do not feel any pain in all this and do not regard any expenditure to be a waste. Nothing is more lovable to them than what takes them near their goal and carries them closer to their place of stay. (Contrariwise), the example of those who are deceived by this world is like the people who were in a green place but became disgruntled with it and went to a drought-stricken place. Therefore, for them nothing is more detestable or abominable than to leave the place where they were and go to a place which they will reach unexpectedly and for which they were heading.

O my child! Make yourself the measure (for dealings) between you and others. Thus, you should wish for others what you wish for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others as you like good to be done to you. Regard as bad for yourself whatever you regard as bad for others. Accept that from others which you like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know even though what you know may be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you.

Be informed that self-admiration is contrary to propriety (of action) and is a calamity for the mind. Therefore, increase your striving and do not become a treasurer for (wealth to be inherited by) others. When you have been guided on the right path, humble yourself before Allah as much as you can.

Be informed that in front of you lies a road of long distance and severe hardship and that you cannot avoid treading it. Take your requirements of provision keeping the burden light. Do not load your back beyond your ability lest its weight should cause you mischief. Whenever

you come across a needy person who can carry for you your provision to hand it back to you on the Day of Judgement when you will need it, accept it as a good opportunity and get him to carry it. Put in that provision as much as you are able to, for it is likely that if you need him (afterwards), you may not get hold of him. If a person is willing to borrow from you in the days of your affluence to pay it back to you at the time of your need, then make use of this opportunity.

Be informed that in front of you lies an impassable valley wherein the light-burdened man will be in a better condition than the heavy-burdened one and the slow-paced will be in a worse condition than the swift-paced. Your terminating point at the other end of this passage will necessarily be either Paradise or Hell. Therefore, reconnoiter for yourself before alighting and prepare the place before getting down because after death there can be no preparation nor any return to this world.

Be informed that Whoever owns the treasuries of the heavens and earth has permitted you to pray to Him and has promised you acceptance of the prayer. He has commanded you to beg from Him in order that He may give you and to seek His mercy in order that He may have mercy on you. He has not placed anything between you and Him that may veil Him from you.

He has not required you to get a mediator between yourself and Him, and if you err, He has not prevented you from repenting. He does not hasten His punishment. He does not reprimand you for repenting, nor does He humiliate you when humiliation is more appropriate for you. He is not harsh in accepting repentance. He does not severely question you about your sins. He does not disappoint you regarding His mercy. Rather, He regards abstention from sin as a virtue. He counts your sin as one while counting your good deed as ten.

He has opened for you the door of repentance. Therefore, whenever you call upon Him, He hears your call, and whenever you whisper to Him, He knows the whispers. Place before Him your needs, unveil yourself before Him, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs and ask Him to grant you from the treasuries of His mercy that which no one else has power to give, namely length of life, health of body and an increase in your sustenance. Then He has placed the keys of His treasures in your hands in the sense that He has shown you the way to ask Him.

Wherever you wish, He opens the doors of His favor by virtue of your prayers. Let the abundant rains of His mercy fall on you. Delay in acceptance of your pleas should not disappoint you because the granting of a plea is dependent on the extent of (your) intention. Sometimes, acceptance (of a plea) is delayed with a view to its being a source of greater reward to the pleading one and a better gift to the anticipating person. Sometimes, you may ask for a thing but it is not given to you and a better thing is given to you later, or a thing is taken away from you for some greater good because sometimes you may ask for a thing which contains ruin for your religion if it is granted to you. Therefore, your request should be for things the beauty of which should be lasting and the burden of which should remain away from you. As for wealth, it will not last for you, nor will you live for its sake.

O my child! Be informed that you have been created for the next world, not for this one, for extinction (in this world), not for lasting, and for dying, not for living. You are in a place which does not belong to you, an abode for making preparations and a passage towards the next world. You are being chased by death from which the runner-away cannot escape, as it will surely overtake him. So, be on guard against it least it should overtake you at a time when you are in a sinful state and you are thinking of repenting, but it creates obstruction between you and between repenting. In such a case, you will ruin yourself.

O my child! Remember death quite often and the place where you have to go suddenly and reach after death, so that when it comes, you will be already on your guard against it, having prepared yourself for it, and it does not come to you all of a sudden and surprise you. Beware lest you should become deceived by the leanings of the people towards worldly attractions and their rushing upon it. Allah has warned you about it and the world has informed you of its mortal character, unveiling to you its evils.

Surely, those (who go) after it are like barking dogs or devouring carnivore who hate each other. Those who are stronger among them eat away the weaker ones, and the big among them tramples over the small. Some are like tied cattle, and some are like untied cattle that have lost their wits and are running in unknown directions. They are flocks of calamities wandering in rugged valleys. There is no herdsman to detain them nor anyone to tend to them and take them to graze. The world has put them on the track of blindness and taken away their vision from the beacons of guidance. They have, therefore, been perplexed in its

bewilderment and sunk in its pleasures. They took it as a god, so it played havoc with them. They, too, played with it and forgot what is beyond it.

Darkness disappears gradually. Now it is as though travellers have got down and those who hasten will soon meet. Be informed, O my child, that everyone who is riding on the carriage of night and day is being carried by them even though he may be stationary; he is covering the distance even though he is staying and resting.

Know with certainty that you cannot achieve your desire and exceed your destined life. You are on the track of those before you. Therefore, be humble in seeking and moderate in earning because often seeking leads to deprivation. Every seeker of livelihood does not get it [on his own], nor is everyone who is moderate in seeking is deprived. Keep yourself away from every low thing even though it may take you to your desired aims because you will not get any return for your own respect which you exhaust. Do not be the slave of others for Allah had made you free. There is no goodness in anything "good" achieved through evil, and there is no good in comfort that is achieved through a (disgracing) effort.

Beware lest bearers of greed should carry you and make you descend down to the springs of destruction. If you can, manage that there will be no wealthy person between yourself and Allah. Do so because in any case you will find what is for you and get what is your share. A little received directly from Allah the Glorified One is more dignified than that which is more but is received through His creatures, although (really) all is from Allah.

It is easier to rectify what you miss by silence than to secure what you lose by speaking. Whatever is in a pot can be retained by closing the lid. I should prefer you retain what is in your hands rather than seeking what is in the hands of others. The bitterness of disappointment is better than seeking a hand-out from people. Manual labor with chastity is better than the riches of a vicious life. A man is the best guard of his own secrets. Often, a man strives for what harms him. Whoever speaks much speaks nonsense. Whoever ponders perceives. Associate yourself with the people of virtue, you will become one of them. Keep aloof from people of vic, you will remain safe from them. The worst food is that which is unlawful. Oppressing the weak is the worst type of oppression.

Where leniency is unsuitable, harshness is lenience. Often, cure is illness and illness is cure. Often, the ill-wisher gives correct advice while the well-wisher cheats. Do not depend upon hopes because hopes are the

mainstay of fools. It is wise to safeguard one's experience. Your best experience is that which teaches you a lesson. Make use of leisure before it changes into grief. Every seeker does not achieve (what he seeks), and everyone who departs never returns. To lose provision and to earn evil for the Day of Judgement means ruin. Every matter has a consequence. What is destined for you will shortly come to you. A trader undertakes a risk. Often a small quantity is more beneficial than a large one. There is no good in an ignoble helper nor in a suspicious friend. Be compliant with the world as long as it is in your grip. Do not put yourself to risk regarding anything in expectation for more. Beware lest the attitude of enmity should overpower you.

Bear yourself towards your brother in such a way that if he disregards kinship, you maintain it; when he turns away, be kind to him and draw near to him; when he withholds, spend over him; when he distances himself, approach him; when he is harsh to you, be lenient to him; when he commits a wrong deed, think of an excuse for him as though you were a slave of his. Take care that this should not be done inappropriately and that you should not behave thus with an undeserving person. Do not take the enemy of your friend as a friend of yours because you will thus antagonize your friend. Give true advice to your brother, be it sweet or bitter. Swallow your anger because I did not find a sweeter thing than its taste in the end, and nothing is more pleasant than it in the end. Be lenient to him who is harsh to you, for it is likely that he will shortly become lenient to you. Treat your enemy with favors because this is the sweeter of the two successes (the success of revenge and the success of doing a favor).

If you intend to cut yourself off from a friend, leave some room for him from your side by which he may resume his friendship if it so occurs to him some day. If anyone has a good idea about you, prove it to be true. Do not disregard the interests of your brother depending upon your terms with him, for he is not your brother if you disregard his interests. Your family should not become the most miserable people on your account. Do not lean towards him who turns away from you. Your brother should not be more firm in his disregard for kinship than you in paying regard to it and you should exceed in doing good to him than his doing evil to you. Do not feel too much the oppression of a person who oppresses you because he is only busy in harming himself and benefitting you. The reward of him who pleases you is not that you should displease him.

Be informed, O my child, that livelihood is of two kinds: a livelihood that you seek and a livelihood that seeks you which is such that if you do not reach it, it will reach you. How bad it is to bend down at the time of need and to be harsh while being in riches! You should have from this world only that with which you can adorn your permanent abode. If you cry over what has gone out of your hands, then also cry for what has not at all come to you. Infer about what has not yet happened from what has already happened because occurrences are ever similar. Do not be like those whom preaching does not benefit unless you inflict pain on them because the wise take instruction from teaching while beasts learn only from beating.

Ward off from yourself the onslaught of worries by firmness of endurance and purity of belief. Whoever gives up moderation commits excesses. A companion is like a relationship. A friend is one whose absence also proves his friendship. Passion is a partner of distress. Often, the near ones are more remote than the distant ones, and often the distant ones are nearer than the near ones. A stranger is one who has no friends. Whoever transgresses right narrows his own passage. Whoever stays in his status remains constant upon it. The most trustworthy intermediary is that which you adopt between yourself and Allah the Glorified One. Whoever does not care for your interests is your enemy. When greed leads to ruin deprivation is an achievement. Not every defect can be reviewed and not every opportunity recurs.

Often, a person with eyes misses the track while a blind person finds the correct path. Delay an evil deed because you will be able to hasten it whenever you wish. The disregard of kinship of the ignorant is equal to regarding the kinship of the wise. Whoever takes the world to be safe, it will betray him. Whoever regards the world as great, it will humiliate him. Not everyone who shoots hits. When authority changes, the time changes, too. Consult the friend before taking a course, the neighbor before buying the house. Beware lest you should mention in your speech what may cause laughter even though you may be relating it from others.

Do not consult women because their view is weak and their determination is unstable. Cover their eyes by keeping them under the veil because strictness of veiling keeps them for long. Their coming out is not worse than your allowing an untrustworthy man to visit them. If you can manage that they should not know anyone other than you, do so. Do not allow a woman matters other than those about herself because a woman is a flower not an administrator. Do not pay her regard beyond herself. Do

not encourage her to intercede for others. Do not show suspicion out of place because this leads a woman on the right course to evil and a chaste woman to deflection.

For everyone among your servants fix a task for which you may hold him responsible. In this way, they will not fling the task one over the other. Respect your kinsmen because they are your wings with which you fly, the origin towards which you return and the hands with which you attack. Place your religion and your world at Allah's disposal and beg Him to ordain the best for you with regard to thenear and the far, this world and the next, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 32

To Mu`awiyah

You have ruined a large group of people whom you have deceived by your misguidance and have flung them into the currents of your sea where darkness covers them and misgivings toss them about. As a result, they have strayed from the right path and turned on their backs. They turned their backs and pushed forward except those wise ones who came back, leaving you behind, having come to understand you very well. They ran towards Allah away from assisting you when you put them to troubles and caused them to deviate from themiddle path. Therefore, O Mu`awiyah, fear Allah about yourself and take your rein away from Satan since this world is shortly to be cut off from you and the next world is near you, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 33

To Othman ibn al-Abbas, his Governor over Mecca

My informer in the West[211] has written to me telling me that some people from Syria have been sent for hajj and who are blind at heart, deaf

[211]Mu`awiyah sent some men disguised as pilgrims to Mecca in order to stir the public and steer them away from their peaceful atmosphere. Taking common men into their confidence, they made a hypocritical show of piety, presenting themselves as God-fearing. They persuaded them that Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) instigated the people against Othman. In the end, they succeeded in getting Othman killed. In this way, they were to hold Ali (ع) responsible for the killing of Othman and to turn the people against him. They also hoped to incline

in the ears and devoid of vision. They confound the truth with vanity, obey men while disobeying Allah, lay a claim on the milk of the world in the name of religion and trade in the pleasures of this world by forsaking the rewards of the virtuous and the God-fearing. No one achieves good except whoever labors for it, and no one is awarded the recompense of evil except whoever commits it. Therefore, carry out your duties like an intelligent, experienced, well-wishing and wise man who follows his superior and is obedient to his Imam. You should avoid what you may have later to explain. Do not rise up in riches nor lose courage when in distress, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 34

To Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr on Coming to Know That He Had Assumed the Position of (Malik) Al-Ashtar as Governor of Egypt after the Latter Had Died on His Way to Egypt

I have come to know of your anger at the status quo of al-Ashtar, but I did not do so because of any shortcoming on your part or to get you to increase your responsibilities. But when I take away what was under your authority, I will place you in a status which will then be less exhausting and more attractive to you.

The man whom I have made Governor of Egypt was my well-wisher and very harsh and vengeful towards our enemies. May Allah have mercy on him since he has finished his days and met his death. I am quite pleased with him. May Allah, too, accord him His pleasure and multiply his rewards. Now get ready for your enemy and act according to your intelligence. Prepare to fighting one who fights you and call to the path of Allah. Seek Allah's help earnestly. If Allah wills, He will assist you in what worries you and help you with what befalls upon you.

Letter 35

To Abdullah Ibn Abbas after Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr Had Been Killed

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the people towards Mu`awiyah by mentioning the greatness of his character, the sublimity of his manners and the tales of his generosity. But when the men whom Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had put on the job informed him of all of this, he wrote this letter to Qutham ibn al-Abbas so that he might keep an eye on their movements and put an end to their mischief.

Now then, Egypt has been conquered and Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, may Allah have mercy on him, has been martyred. We seek his reward from Allah. He was a son who was a well-wisher, a hard worker, a sharp sword and a bastion of defense. I had called upon the people to join him and ordered them to reach him to help him prior to this incident. I repeatedly called upon them secretly and openly. Some of them came half-heartedly, some put up false excuses, and some sat away leaving me behind. I ask Allah, the Sublime One, to grant me an early relief from them, for by Allah, had I not been yearning to meet the enemy for the sake of martyrdom and not prepared myself for death, I would not have liked to be with these people for a single day, nor ever to face the enemy with them.

Letter 36

To His Brother, Aqil ibn Abu Talib[1], in Reply to His Letter Containing a Reference to the Army Which Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Had Sent to Meet an Enemy

I sent him a large army of Muslims. When he came to know of it, he fled away and retreated in repent. They met him on the way when the sun was about to set. They grappled for a while like nothing. It was about an hour then he rescued himself, half-dead, as he had almost been taken by the neck and only the last breath had remained in him. In this way, he escaped in panic.

Leave the tribesmen of Quraish rushing in misguidance, their galloping in disunity and their leaping over destruction. They have joined

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[212]Following the arbitration, Mu`awiyah started a campaign of killing and devastation. He sent a force of four thousand under ad-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri to attack Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's cities. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) came to know of his activities, he stirred the people of Kufa to put up defenses, but they began to offer lame excuses. At last, Hijr ibn Adiy al-Kindi rose with a force of four thousand men and, chasing the enemy, overtook him at Tadmur. The two parties had only a few skirmishes when darkness fell in and ad-Dahhak fled away under its cover. This was the time when Aqil ibn Abu Talib had come to Mecca for *umra*. When he came to know that after attacking Hira, ad-Dahhak had escaped alive, that the people of Kufa were afraid of war and all their activities had come to a halt, he sent a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) through Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ubayd al-Azdi offering his help. In reply, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this letter wherein he complained of the behavior of the people of Kufa, making a reference to the flight of ad-Dahhak.

together to fight me as they had joined to fight the Messenger of Allah (ص) before me. I wish the tribesmen of Quraish will get the reward of thus treating me. They disregarded my kinship [to the Prophet (ص)] and deprived me of the power due to me from the son of my mother (i.e. the Holy Prophet [ص]).

As regarding your inquiry about my opinion to fight till I die, I am in favor of fighting those who regard fighting as lawful. The crowd of men around me does not give me strength, nor does their dispersal from me cause any loneliness. Surely, do not consider the son of your father as weak or afraid, even though all people have forsaken him. Bow down submissively before injustice or hand over his reins into the hand of the puller, or allow his back to be used by the rider to sit on. But he is as the man of Banu Salim has:

If you inquire how I am, then listen: I am enduring and strong
Against the vicissitudes of time. I do not allow myself to be forlorn
Lest the foe feels joyed and the friend feels the sorrow.

Letter 37

To Mu`awiyah

Glory to Allah! How staunchly you cling to innovated passions and painful bewilderment along with ignoring the facts and rejecting strong reasons which are liked by Allah and serve as pleas for the people! As regarding your prolonging the question of `Othman's murder[213], the

[213]There is no question that Mu`awiyah claimed to help Othman after the latter had been killed. When Othman was besieged and desperately needed help, he wrote Mu`awiyah pleading for his help, but his written plea fell upon the deaf ears of Mu`awiyah who never budged an inch. However, just to make a public show that he sent a contingent to Medina under the command of Yazid ibn Asad al-Qasri, ordering it to remain waiting nearby in the valley of Dhu Khushub near Medina. Eventually, Othman was murdered and the commander went back with his contingent, having accomplished nothing. Undoubtedly, Mu`awiyah wished Othman to be killed so that he could create confusion in the name of seeking revenge for the shedding of his blood. Through such disturbances, Mu`awiyah could clear the way for securing allegiance to himself (as caliph). This is why he neither helped Othman when he was besieged nor thought it necessary to trace the murderers of Othman after actually having secured power for himself.

situation is that you helped Othman when you were really promoting your own cause, and you forsook him when he was in need of help, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 38

To the People of Egypt When He Appointed (Malik Ibn) al-Ashtar as Their Governor

From the slave of Allah, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, to the people who became wrathful for the sake of Allah when He was disobeyed on His earth and His rights were ignored and oppression had spread its coverings over the virtuous as well as the vicious, on the native as well as the foreigner. Consequently, no good was acted upon nor any evil was avoided.

I have sent you a man from among the servants of Allah Who allows himself no sleep in the days of danger, nor does he shrink from the enemy at critical moments. He is more severe with the wicked than a blazing fire. He is Malik ibn al-Harith, our brother from (the tribe of) Madhhaj. Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that agree with what is right because he is a sword among the swords of Allah the edge of which is not dull and which does not miss its victim. If he orders you to advance, do advance, and if he orders you to stay, do stay because he surely neither advances nor attacks nor puts anyone backward or forward save with my command. I have preferred him for you rather than for myself because of his being your well-wisher and (because of) the severity of his harshness with your enemies.

Letter 39

To Amr ibn al-As

You have surely made your religion subservient to the worldly pursuits of a man whose misguidance is not a concealed matter and whose veil has been torn away. He mars an honorable man with his company and makes fools of those around him. You are following in his footsteps and seeking his favors like the dog that follows the lion looking at its paws and waiting for whatever remains of his prey that will fall down to it. In this way, you have ruined your world as well as the next. Had you stuck to the right, you would have gotten what you were seeking. If Allah grants me power over you and over the son of Abu Sufyan (Mu`awiyah), I

shall award you both the recompense of what you have done, but if you escape and survive, then there is only evil for you both, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 40

To One of His Officers

I have come to know such a thing about you which, if you have, you have displeased your Lord, disobeyed your Imam and betrayed your trust.

I have come to know that you have razed the ground and taken away whatever was under your feet, devouring whatever fell in your hands. Send me your account and be admonished that accounting to Allah will be much more severe than that to the people, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 41

To One of His Officers

I had made you a partner in my trust and my chief man. For me, no other person from my kinsmen was more trustworthy than you in the matter of sympathizing with me, assisting and respecting my trust. But when you saw that time had attacked your cousin, the enemy had waged war, the trust of the people was being humiliated and the community was trackless and disunited, you turned your back against your cousin and forsook him when others forsook him. You abandoned him when others abandoned him and betrayed him when others betrayed him. Thus, you showed no sympathy to your cousin, nor did you discharge the trust.

It seems as if you do not want to please Allah through your jihad, as if you do not stand upon a clear sign from your Lord, and as if you have been playing tricks with this umma (Muslim community) in order to earn (the pleasure of) this world, watching for the moment of their neglectfulness in order to usurp their wealth. As soon as it was possible for you to misappropriate the umma's trust, you tended to turn around and attack (them), making a swift leap to snatch away whatever you could from their property. Such a property was intended for their widows and orphans. You did so like a wolf snatching a wounded and helpless goat. Then you happily loaded it off to Hijaz without feeling guilty for having thus acquired it. Allah's woe be upon your ill-wishers! It was as though

you were sending to your family what you had inherited from your parents.

Glory to Allah! Do you either not believe in the Day of Judgement, or you do not fear the exaction of account? O you who were counted by us among the men possessing sound minds, how can you enjoy food and drink when you know that you are eating and drinking what is unlawful? You are purchasing bondmaids and wedding women with the money of the orphans, the poor, the believers and the participants in jihad to whom Allah had dedicated this money and through whom He had strengthened these cities. Fear Allah and return to these people their properties. If you do not do so and Allah grants me power over you, I shall excuse myself before Allah about you and strike you with my sword with which I did not strike anyone but that he went to Hell.

By Allah, even if Hassan and Hussain (ع) had done what you did, there would have been no leniency for them, and they could not have won their way with me till I had recovered from them the right and destroyed the wrong produced by their unjust actions. I swear by Allah, the Master of all beings, that I will not be pleased to regard their money which you have appropriated as lawful for me and to leave it to my successors by way of inheritance. Mind yourself and consider for a while as though you had reached the end of life and had been buried under the earth. Your actions will then be presented before you in the place where the oppressor cries "Alas!" while whoever wasted his life yearns for return (to the world) "... but there was no time to escape" (Holy Quran, 38: 3).

Letter 42

To Umar Ibn Abu Salamah Al-Makhzumi (Foster-Son of the Holy Prophet (ص) from Umm Al-Mu'minin, Umm Salamah) Who Was Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Governor of Bahrain, but Whom He Removed and Replaced with An-nu'man Ibn Ajlan az-Zuraqi

I have posted an-Nu'man ibn `Ajlan az-Zuraqi in Bahrain and have released you from that position without anything bad from you nor reproach on you because you managed to govern well and carried out your obligations. Therefore, proceed to me when you are neither suspected nor rebuked, neither blamed nor guilty. I have just intended to proceed towards the rebel of Syria [Mu`awiyah]. I wish that you should be with me because you are among those on whom I can rely in fighting the enemy and in erecting the pillars of religion, if Allah so wills.

Letter 43

To Masqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani, Governor of Ardashir Khurrah (Persia)

I have come to know about you a matter which, if you have done, you will have displeased your Lord and disobeyed your Imam. You are distributing among the Arabs (bedouins) of your kin who tend to you the property of the Muslims which they collected by dint of their spears and horses and on which their blood was shed. By Allah Who germinated the seed and created living beings, if this is true, you will be humbled in my view and you will become light in weight. Therefore, do not treat lightly the obligations of your Lord and do not reform your world by ruining your religion, since then you will be among the losers through your actions.

Be informed that the right of those Muslims who are around you and those who are around me in this property is equal. For that reason, they come to me to take from it.

Letter 44

To Ziyad Ibn Abih When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Came to Know That Mu`awiyah Had Written to Ziyad to Deceive Him and to Attach Him to Himself in Kinship

I have learned that Mu`awiyah has written to you to deceive your wit and blunt your sharpness. You should be on guard against him because he is the Satan who approaches a believer from the front and from the back, from the right and from the left, to catch him suddenly in the hour of his carelessness and to overcome his intelligence.

During the days of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, Abu Sufyan happened to utter a thoughtless point which was an evil insinuation of Satan from which neither kinship is established nor entitlement to succession occurs. Whoever relies on it is like the uninvited guest to a drinking party or like the dangling cup (tied to a saddle).

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “When Ziyad read the letter, he said, ‘By Allah he has testified to it’. This point remained in his mind till Mu`awiyah claimed him (to be his brother from his father’s side).”

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's word "al-waghil" means the man who joins the drinking group so as to drink with them, but he is not one of them. He is, therefore, constantly turned out and pushed away. As for the words "an-nawtul-mudhabdhab", it is a wooden cup or a bowl, or the like, attached to the saddle of the rider so that it dangles when the rider drives the beast or it hastens its pace.

Umar ibn al-Khattab sent Ziyad to Yemen for some encounter. When he returned, having finished his mission, he addressed a gathering which included Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Umar, Amr ibn al-As and Abu Sufyan. Impressed with the speech, Amr ibn al-As said the following: "What a good man! Had he been from the tribesmen of Quraish, he would have led all of Arabia with his stick," whereupon Abu Sufyan said, "He is from the tribesmen of Quraish since I know who his father is." Amr ibn al-As inquired, "Who was his father?" Abu Sufyan said, "It is I." History also conclusively holds that Ziyad's mother, Sumayya, who was a slave-maid of al-Harith ibn Kaldah and was married to a slave named Ubayd, used to lead an immoral life in a quarter of at-Ta'if known as Haratul-Baghaya (quarter of the prostitutes) and immoral men used to visit her. Once Abu Sufyan also slept with her through the mediation of Abu Maryam as-Saluli. As a result, Ziyad was born. When Amr ibn al-As heard this from Abu Sufyan, he asked why he had not declared it publicly. Abu Sufyan pointed to `Umar [ibn al-Khattab] and said that he was afraid of him; otherwise, he would have declared him as his own son. Although he would not have dared to do this, when Mu`awiyah acquired power, he started correspondence with him because Mu`awiyah was in need of such persons who were intelligent and cunning and expert in scheming. In any case, when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) got information about this correspondence, he wrote this letter to Ziyad wherein he warned him against Mu`awiyah so that he should not fall in the trap. But he did fall in his trap anyway and joined Mu`awiyah; the latter declared him as his brother by attributing him to his kinsfolk although the Prophet (ص) had declared, "The child goes to the lawful husband while the adulterer gets stoned."

Letter 45

To Othman Ibn Hunayf al-Ansari Who Was Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Governor of Basra When He Came to Know That the People of Basra Had Invited Othman to a Banquet which He Attended

O son of Hunayf! I have come to know that a young man of Basra invited you to a feast and you leapt towards it. Foods of different colors were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought that you would accept the feast of a people who turn the beggars out while inviting the rich. Look at the morsels which you take. Leave out that about which you are in doubt and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully.

Remember that every follower has a leader whom he follows, and from the glory of whose knowledge he derives light. Realize that your Imam is satisfied with two shabby pieces of cloth out of the (comforts of the) world and two loaves for his meal. Certainly, you cannot do so, but at least support me in piety, exertion, chastity and uprightness because, by Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor collected any clothes other than these two shabby sheets.

Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt greedy for it, and the other party withheld themselves from it. Allah is, after all, the best arbiter. What shall I do? Fadak or no Fadak, tomorrow this body is to go into the grave in the darkness of which it will be destroyed and (even) news of it will disappear. It is a pit that, even if its width is widened or the hands of the digger make it broad and open, the stones and clods of clay will narrow it and the falling earth will close its opening. I try to keep myself engaged in piety so that on the Day of Great Fear it will be peaceful and steady in slippery places.

Had I wished, I could have taken the way leading to (worldly pleasures like) pure honey, fine wheat and silk clothes, but it cannot be that my passions lead me and greed takes me to choosing good meals while in the Hijaz or in Yamama there may be people who have no hope of getting bread or who do not have a full meal. Shall I lie down with a satiated belly while around me there may be hungry bellies and thirsty livers? Or shall I be as the poet has said:

It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full While around you people may be badly yearning for dried leather...?

Shall I be content with being called Amīr al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful), although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world? Or shall I be an example for them in the distresses of life? I have not been created to keep myself busy eating good foods

like a tied animal whose only worry is his fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to swallow. It fills its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely, or draw the rope of misguidance or roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment?

I see as if one of you will say that if this is what the son of Abu Talib eats, then weakness must have made him unfit to fight his foes and encounter the brave ones. Remember that the tree of the forest is the best timber, while green twigs have soft bark and the wild bushes are very strong for burning and slow in dying. My relationship with the Messenger of Allah is that of one branch with another, or like the wrist with the forearm. By Allah, if the Arabs join together to fight me, I will not run away from them, and if I get the opportunity, I will hasten to catch them by their necks. I shall surely strive to relieve the earth of this man of perverse mind and uncouth body till the bits of earth are removed from the grain.

An excerpt from the same which is the end of the letter:

Get away from me, O world! Your rein is on your own shoulders as I have released myself from your clutches, removed myself from your snares and avoided walking into your slippery places. Where are those whom you have deceived by your jokes? Where are those communities whom you have enticed with your embellishments? They are all confined to graves and hidden in burial places. By Allah, if you had been a visible personality and a body capable of feeling, I will have awarded you the penalties fixed by Allah because of the people whom you received through desires, the communities whom you threw into destruction and the rulers whom you consigned to ruin and drove to places of distress after which there is neither going nor returning. Indeed, whoever stepped on your slippery place slipped, whoever rode your waves was drowned, and whoever evaded your snares received inward support. Whoever keeps himself safe from you does not worry even though his affairs may be straitened and the world to him is like a day which is near to expire.

Get away from me for, by Allah, I do not bow before you so that you may humiliate me, nor do I let loose the reins for you so that you may drive me away! I swear by Allah an oath wherein I, except if Allah wills otherwise, shall so train myself that it will feel joyed if it gets one loaf to eat and be content with only salt to season it. I shall let my eyes empty themselves of tears like the stream whose water has flown away. Should Ali eat whatever he has and fall asleep like the cattle who fill their stomachs from the pasture land then lie down, or as the grazing goats, eat

the green grass then go into their pen! His eyes may die if he, after long years, follows the ways of loose cattle and pasturing animals.

Blessed is whoever carries out his obligations towards Allah and endures his hardships, allows himself no sleep in the night but when sleep overpowers him, he lies down on the ground using his hand as a pillow, along with those who keep their eyes wakeful in fear of the Day of Judgement, whose bodies are ever away from beds, whose lips are humming in remembrance of Allah and whose sins have been erased through their prolonged beseeching for forgiveness. They are the party of Allah; Be it known, "... verily the part of Allah alone shall be the successful one" (Holy Quran, 58: 22). Therefore, O Ibn Hunayf, fear Allah and be content with your own loaves so that you may escape Hell.

Fadak was a green fertile village near Medina in the Hijaz region, and it also had a fortress called ash-Shumrukh (Mu'jam al-Buldan, Vol. 4, p. 238; Mu'jam Masta'jam, al-Bakri, Vol. 3, p. 1015; Al-Rawd al-Mi'tar, al-Himyari, p. 437; Wafa' al-Wafa', Vol. 4, p. 1280). Fadak belonged to the Jews. In the year 7 A.H., its ownership went from the Jews to the Prophet (ص) under the terms of a peace settlement. The reason for this settlement was that after the fall of Khaybar, the Jews realized the real power of the Muslims, their martial aspirations were lowered. Noting that the Prophet (ص) had spared the lives of some Jews who sought his protection, the Jews also sent a message of peace to the Prophet (ص) and expressed their desire that Fadak should be taken from them so that their area should not be turned into a battlefield. Consequently, the Prophet (ص) accepted their request and granted them amnesty. This land became his personal property wherein no one else had any right or claim, nor could there be any interest because the Muslims had a share only in those properties which they acquired as booty after jihad, whereas property acquired without jihad is called fay' and only the Prophet (ص) was entitled to it. No other person has a share in it. Thus, Allah says the following: "And whatever Allah bestows on His Messenger from them, you did not stir any horse or a camel towards it, but Allah grants authority to whomsoever of His Messengers He pleases; and Allah over all things is all-Powerful" (Holy Quran, 59: 6).

No one has ever disputed the fact that Fadak was secured without battle. It was, therefore, the Prophet's personal property to which no one else was entitled. The Historians write:.

"Fadak was personal to the Prophet (ص) as the Muslims did not use their horses or camels to acquire it" (Tarikh, al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 1582-583, 1589; Al-Kamil, Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 2, pp. 224-225; As-Sira, Ibn Hisham, Vol. 3, p. 368; Tarikh, Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, part 2, p. 40; Tarikh al-Khamis, ad-Diyar-Bakri, Vol. 2, p. 58; Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, Vol. 3, p. 50).

The historian and geographical scholar, Ahmed ibn Yahya al-Baladhiri (d. 279/892), writes the following: "Fadak was the personal property of the Prophet (ص) as the Muslims had not used their horses nor camels for its acquisition" (Fath al-Buldan, Vol. 1, p. 33).

Umar ibn al-Khattab had himself regarded Fadak as the unshared property of the Holy Prophet (ص) when he declared the following: "The property of Banu an-Nadir was among that which Allah bestowed on His Messenger. Against them [its original Jewish owners], neither horses nor camels were stirred. It belonged to the Messenger of Allah specifically" (Sahih, al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, p. 46; Vol. 7, p. 82; Vol. 9, pp. 121-122 Sahih, Muslim, Vol. 5, p. 151; Al-Sunan, Abu Dawud, Vol. 3, pp. 139-141; Al-Sunan, al-Nisa'i, Vol. 7, p. 132; Al-Musnad, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, pp. 25, 48, 60, 208; Al-Sunan al-Kubra, al-Bayhayqi, Vol. 6, pp. 296-299).

It is also proven, in the accepted way, that the Prophet (ص) had in his lifetime given this land (Fadak) to Fatima (ع) as a gift. It is narrated through al-Bazzar, Abu Ya`li, Ibn Abu Hatim, Ibn Mardawayh and others from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and through Ibn Mardawayh from Abdullah ibn Abbas that when the verse: "And give to the near of kin his due..." (Holy Quran, 17: 26) was revealed, the Holy Prophet (ص) called Fatima (ع) and gave her Fadak as a gift" (Al-Durr al-Manthur, al-Sayyuti, vol, 4, p. 177; Majma' al-Zawa'id, al-Haythami, vol, 7, p. 46; Kanz al-Ummal, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Vol. 3, p. 439; Ruh al-Ma'ani, al-Alusi, Vol. 15, p. 62).

When Abu Bakr assumed power then, in view of reaping some benefits for his government, he turned Fatima (ع) out of Fadak and took it from her possession. Thus, the historians write: "Certainly, Abu Bakr snatched Fadak from Fatima (ع) (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 16, p. 219; Wafa'ul-Wafa', as-Samhudi, Vol. 3, p. 1000; Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, Ibn Hajar, p. 32).

Fatima (ع) raised her objection against such an injustice. Protesting to Abu Bakr, she said, "You have taken over the possession of Fadak although the Prophet (ص) had given it to me as a gift during his lifetime." To this, Abu Bakr asked her to produce a witness for the gift. Consequently, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and Umm Ayman testified in her favor. Umm Ayman was the freed bondmaid and the dry nurse of the Holy Prophet (ص). She was the mother of Usamah ibn Zayd ibn al-Harithah. The Holy Prophet (ص) used to say, "Umm Ayman is my mother after my own mother" [Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 4, p. 63; al-Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 3460; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 4, p. 1793; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 5, p. 567. The Holy Prophet (ص) testified that she is among the people of Paradise (Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 8, p. 192; Al-Isaba, Vol. 4, p. 432). But this testimony was held inadmissible by Abu Bakr, and Fatima's claim was rejected as being based on a false statement. About this, al-Baladhiri writes the following: "Fatima (ع) said to Abu Bakr, 'The Messenger of Allah had appropriated Fadak to me. Therefore, give it to me.' He asked her for a witness other than Umm Ayman, saying, 'O daughter of the Prophet (ص)! You know that testimony is not admissible except by two men or one man and two women."

After these facts, there remains no possibility of denying that Fadak was the personal property of the Prophet (ص) and that he had completed its gifting to her by handing over possession in his own lifetime. But Abu Bakr took over its possession and dislodged her from it. In this regard, he rejected the testimony of Ali and Umm Ayman on the ground that the requirement of testimony was not completed when only one man and one woman testify. Besides them, Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (ع), too, testified in support for Fatima (ع), but their testimony, too, was rejected on the ground that the testimony of the offspring and "minors" was not acceptable in favor of their parents. Then Rabah, slave of the Holy Prophet (ص), was also produced as a witness in support for the claim of Fatima (ع), brining the number of witnesses to five. But the testimony of the virtuous Rabah, too, was rejected (Fath al-Buldan, al-Baladhiri, Vol. 1, p. 35; Tarikh, al-Ya`qubi, Vol. 3, p. 195; Muruj al-Dhahab, al-Mas`udi, Vol. 3, p. 237; Al-Awa'il, Abu Hilal al-Askari, p. 209; Wafa' al-Wafa', Vol. 3, pp. 999, 1000-1001; Mu'jam al-Buldan, Yaqut al-Hamawi, Vol. 4, p. 239; Sharh, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 16, pp. 216, 219-220, 274; Al-Muhalla, Ibn Hazm, Vol. 6, p. 507; Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, Vol. 3, p. 361; At-Tafsir, al-Fakhr ar-Radi, Vol. 29, p. 284).

At this stage, the question arises that when Fatima's possession of Fadak is admitted, as Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) also clarifies in this letter by saying, "We had Fadak in our possession," what was the meaning of asking Fatima (ع) to produce testimony in support for her claim since the onus of proof does not lie on the person with the claim of ownership? The onus of proof lies on the person filing a counter claim, an objection, because possession itself constitutes a proof. As such, it was Abu Bakr who was required to produce a proof to the lawfulness of his own taking the contested land from its owner. In the case, if he is unable to do so, Fatima's possession will mean an testimony of her lawful ownership. As such, it will be wrong to ask her to produce some more proof or testimony on her own.

It is strange that when other claims of this nature came before Abu Bakr, he arbitrated them in favor of the claimant merely on the basis of the claim: The claimant is neither asked to provide proof of his claim nor to produce witnesses. Why did Abu Bakr apply a different standard in the case of "Sayyidatu Nisaa' al-'Aalameen"? Did he hold the daughter of the Prophet (ص) as a liar? Or did he have other political objectives in mind when he treated her with such injustice? In this regard, the traditionists write the following: "It is related from Jabir ibn `Abdillah al-Ansari that he said that the Messenger of Allah (ص) had said that when the booty from Bahrain arrived, he would allow him such-and-such of it, but the booty did not arrive till the Prophet's death. When it arrived during the days of Abu Bakr, he went to the latter to claim it. Abu Bakr made the announcement that whoever had a claim against the Messenger of Allah or against whomsoever he had made a promise should come for his claim. So, I went to him and told him that the Prophet (ص) had promised to give me such-and- such property out of the booty from Bahrain whereupon he gave me all of that" (Sahih, al-Bukhari, Vol. 3, pp. 119, 209, 236; Vol. 4, p. 110; Vol. 5, p. 218; Sahih, Muslim, Vol. 7, pp. 75-76; Al-Jami' al-Sahih, al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 5, p. 129; Al-Musnad, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 3, pp. 307-308; Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 2, part 2, pp.88-89).

In the annotations of this tradition, Shihabud-Din Ahmed ibn Ali (Ibn Hajar) al-Asqalani ash-Shafi'i (773/1372-852/1449) and Badrud-Din Mahmud ibn Ahmed al-Ayni al-Hanafi (762/1361-855/1451) have written the following: "This tradition leads to the conclusion that the testimony of one equitable companion can be admitted as full testimony [equal to two or more] even though it may be in his own personal favor because Abu Bakr did not ask Jabir to produce any [other] witness to prove his claim.

(Fath al-Bari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 5, p. 380; Umdatul-Qari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 12, p. 121).

If it is lawful to grant property to Jabir on the basis of good impression about him without calling for witness or testimony anyone at all, then what stopped allowing Fatima's claim on the basis of similar good impressions? Or was Abu Bakr 's impression of the Head of the Women of Mankind not good at all? If good impression could exist in the case of Jabir to such an extent that he would not benefit by speaking a lie, then why should there not be the good belief about Fatima (ع) that she would not attribute a false saying to the Prophet (ص) just for a piece of land? Firstly, her admitted truthfulness and honesty was enough for holding her truthful in her claim. Moreover, the testimony of Ali and Umm Ayman in her favor was also available besides other evidences. It has been said that the claim could not be decided in favor of Fatima (ع) on the basis of these two witnesses because the Holy Quran lays down the principle of testimony that: "... .then call to witness two witnesses from among your men and if there not be two men, then a man and two men" (Holy Quran, 2: 282).

If this principle is universal and general, then it should be taken into regard on every occasion, not selectively. But on some occasions, it is found not to have been followed at all. For example, when an Arab had a dispute with the Prophet (ص) about a camel, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari gave testimony in favor of the Prophet (ص), and this one single witness was deemed to be equal to two because there was no doubt in the honesty and truthfulness of this individual in whose favor the testimony was led. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet (ص) granted him the title of "Dhul-Shahadatayn" (i.e. one whose testimony is equivalent to that of two) (al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, p. 24; Vol. 6, p. 146; Abu Dawud, Vol. 3, p. 308; al-Nisa'i, Vol. 7, p. 302; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 5, pp. 188, 189, 216; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 2, p. 448; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 2, p. 114; Al-Isaba, Vol. 1, pp. 425-426; Al-Musannaf, as-Sanani, Vol. 8, pp. 366-368).

Consequently, neither was the generality of the verse about testimony affected by this action, nor was it deemed to be against the cannons of testimony. So, if here, in view of the Prophet's truthfulness, one testimony in his favor was deemed to be equal to two, then could not the testimony of Ali and Umm Ayman be regarded sufficient Fatima (ع) in view of her moral greatness and truthfulness? Besides, this verse does not show that there can be no other way of establishing a claim other than

these two methods. In this regard, judge Nurullah al-Mar'ashi at-Tustari (956/1549-1019/1610) has written the following in Ihqaq-al-Haqq, chapter on al-Mata'in: "The view of the contention that Umm Ayman's testimony remained incomplete is wrong on the grounds that from certain traditions, it is seen that it is lawful to give a decision on the basis of one single witness, and it does not necessarily mean that the injunction of the Holy Quran has been violated because this verse means that a decision can be given on the strength of the testimony of two men or one man and two women and that their testimony is enough. From this, it does not appear that if there are some other grounds besides the testimony of witnesses that are unacceptable and that verdict cannot be given on its basis, unless it is argued that this is the only meaning for this verse. But since every meaning is not a final argument, this notion can be brushed aside, particularly because the tradition clearly points to a contrary notion and ignoring the notion does not necessarily mean violating the verse. Secondly, the verse allows a choice between the testimony of two men or that of one man and two women. If, by virtue of the tradition, a third choice is added, namely that a verdict can be passed by means of other testimony as well, then how does it necessitate that the Quranic verse should stand violated?!"

In any case, from this reply, it is clear that a claimant is not obligated to produce the testimony of two men or that of one man and two women in support for the claim. This is so because if there is one witness and the claimant swears an oath, he can then be taken to have legitimacy in his claim and a decision can be given in his favor. In this regard, it has been narrated by more than twelve companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) that the Messenger of Allah (ص) used to decide cases on the strength of one single witness and the taking of an oath.

It has been explained by some companions of the Prophet (ص) and by some scholars of jurisprudence that this decision is specially related to rights, property and transactions, and this decision was practiced by the three caliphs: Abu Bakr, `Umar and Othman (Muslim, Vol. 5, p. 128; Abu Dawūd, Vol. 3, pp. 308-309; al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 3, pp. 627-629; Ibn Majah, Vol. 2, p. 793; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, pp. 248, 315, 323; Vol. 3, p. 305; Vol. 5, p. 285; Malik ibn Anas, Al-Muwatta', Vol. 2, pp. 721-725; al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 10, pp. 167-176; Al-Sunan, al-Dar Qutni, Vol. 4, pp. 212-215; Majma'az-Zawa'id, Vol. 4, p. 202; Kanz al-`Ummal, Vol. 7, p. 13).

When decisions were issued based on the strength of one witness and one oath, then even if in Abu Bakr's view the requirement of testimony was incomplete, he should have asked her to swear an oath then give a decision in her favor. But here the very objective was to tarnish the image of truthfulness of Fatima (ع) so that in the future the question of her testimony should not arise.

However, when Fatima's claim was rejected in this manner and Fadak was not accepted as the Prophet's gift to her, she claimed it on the basis of inheritance saying: "If you do not agree that the Prophet (ص) had gifted it to me, you cannot at least deny that Fadak and the revenues of Khaybar as well as the lands around Medina were the Prophet's personal properties and I am his only heir." Yet she was deprived of her inheritance on the basis of a tradition related by Abu Bakr himself that the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "We, prophets, have no successors, and whatever we leave behind constitutes charity" (al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, p. 96; Vol. 5, pp. 25-26, 115, 117; Vol. 8, p. 185; Muslim, Vol. 5, pp. 153-155; al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 4, pp. 157-158; Abu Dawud, Vol. 3, pp. 142-143; al-Nisa'i, Vol. 7, p. 132; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, pp. 4, 6, 9, 10; al-Bayhaqi, Vol. 6, p. 300; Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 86-87; al-Tabari, Vol. 1, p. 1825; Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. 2, pp. 173-174).

Besides Abu Bakr, nobody else had any knowledge of this statement which was presented to the public as a tradition of the Prophet (ص), nor had anyone from among the companions heard it at all. Who is the truthful one, Fatima (ع) or Abu Bakr? Thus, Jalalu'd-Din `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr al-Sayyuti ash-Shafi'i (849/1445-911/1505) and Shihabud-Din Ahmed ibn Muhammad (Ibn Hajar) al-Haytami ash-Shafi'i (909/1504-974/1567) have written the following: "After the death of the Prophet (ص), there was a difference of opinion about inheritance and no one had any information in this matter. Then, Abu Bakr said that he had heard the Messenger of Allah saying, 'We, prophets, leave no successors, and whatever we leave behind constitutes charity'" (Tarikh al-Khulafa', p.73; Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, p. 19).

The mind refuses to believe that the Prophet (ص) should not tell those individuals who could be deemed as his successors that they would not inherit and inform a third party that did not have even the most remote kinship to him, that there would be no heir/successor to him. Is not Abū Bakr considered as a "successor" of the Prophet (ص) by many people?! Is there no contradiction here?! Then this story was made public only when

the issue of Fadak was raised in the court of Abu Bakr who himself constituted the contesting party! In such circumstances, how can his presenting in his own support a tradition which no one else at all had ever heard be deemed permissible? If it is argued that this tradition should be relied upon in view of the greatness of the status of Abu Bakr, then why can Fatima's claim to the said gift not be relied upon because of her honesty and truthfulness, more so when the testimony of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and that of Umm Ayman, as well as of others as well, was also in her favor? If necessity was felt to call more witnesses in her case, then testimony can also be called for regarding this alleged unheard-of "tradition", particularly since this "tradition" contradicted the general instructions of the Holy Quran relevant to the issue of succession and inheritance. How can a tradition which is weak in the manner of its relating and altered and the authenticity of which is questioned on the basis of facts to the contrary be deemed to specify a generality of the Quranic injunction on inheritance/succession because the question of the inheritance of the prophets is clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran. In this regard, Allah says the following: "... And Solomon inherited David" (Holy Quran, 27: 16). So, prophets do leave heirs/successors...

At another place, the following is stated by prophet Zakariyya: "... Grant me from Yourself an heir who shall inherit me and inherit the family of Jacob" (Holy Quran, 19: 5-6). So, prophets do leave heirs/successors...

In these verses, succession refers to inheriting estates, etc. To take it in its figurative meaning of succession in prophetic knowledge would not only be absurd but also against established facts because knowledge and Prophethood are not objects of succession, nor do they possess the quality of transmission through inheritance, for in that case, all the descendants of the prophets would have been prophets. There is no sense in making a distinction that the progeny of some prophets may inherit Prophethood while others should remain deprived of it. It is strange that the theory of transmission of Prophethood through inheritance is propagated by those who have always laid the objection against the Shī`as that they regard the Imamate and the caliphate as an objective of inheritance and confined to one family only. Would not Prophethood become an objective of inheritance by taking succession in this verse to mean succession to the Prophethood?

If, in Abu Bakr's view, by virtue of this tradition, there could be no successor of the Prophet (ص), then where was this tradition when a

document had been written admitting Fatima's claim for succession? Thus, Nurud-Din Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Halabi ash-Shafi'i (975/1567-1044/1635) quotes Shamsu'd-Din Yusuf (Sibt ibn al-Jawzi) al-Hanafi (581/1185-654/1256) narrating the following: "Abu Bakr was on the pulpit when Fatima (ع) came to him and said, 'O Abu Bakr! The Holy Quran should allow your daughter to inherit you, yet I am not to inherit my father!' Abu Bakr started weeping and descended from the pulpit. Then he wrote her a statement about Fadak. At that time, Umar arrived and inquired what the written sheet was all about. Abu Bakr replied, 'It is a document which I have written for Fatima (ع) about the inheritance from her father.' Umar said, 'What will you spend on the Muslims while the Arabs are waging war against you, as you see?' Then Umar took the document and tore it to pieces" (Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, Vol. 3, pp. 361-362).

Every sensible person who takes note of this behavior can easily reach the conclusion that this tradition is concocted and wrong. It was fabricated only to secure possession of Fadak and other inheritances. Consequently, Fatima (ع) refused to accept it and expressed her anger in this way: She made a will about Abu Bakr and `Umar that the two should not participate in her funeral prayers. Aisha narrated the following: "Fatima (ع), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص), sent for Abu Bakr (after he became caliph following the death of the Holy Prophet (ص) claiming from him her inheritance left for her by the Messenger of Allah from what Allah had bestowed (specifically) upon him in Medīna and Fadak and what was left from the fifth (khums) of the income from Khaybar. Abu Bakr refused to hand over anything from it to Fatima (ع). Then, Fatima (ع) became angry with Abu Bakr and forsook him and did not talk to him till the end of her life. When she died, her husband, Ali ibn Abu Talib, buried her at night. He did not inform Abu Bakr about her death and performed the funeral prayers for her personally" (al-Bukhari, Vol. 5, p. 177; Vol. 8, p. 185; Muslim, Vol. 5, pp. 153-155; al-Bayhaqi, Vol. 4, p. 29; Vol. 6, pp. 300-301; Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 2, part 2, p. 86; Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, p. 9; al-Tabari, Vol. 1, p. 1825; Ibn Kathir, Tarikh, Vol. 5, pp. 285-286; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 6, p. 46 and Wafa' al-Wafa',Vol. 3, p. 995).

In this regard, Umm Ja`far, the daughter of Muhammad ibn Ja`far, narrated the following about the request of Fatima (ع), who was nearing her death, to Asma' daughter of `Umays: "When I die, I want you and Ali to wash me and do not allow anyone to go into my house."

When she died, Aisha came to enter, but Asma' said to her, "Do not enter." Aisha complained to Abu Bakr (her father) saying, "This Khath'amiyya (woman from the tribe of Kath'am) intervenes between us and the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ص)." Abu Bakr came out, stood at the door and said, "O Asma'! What makes you prevent the wives of the Prophet (ص) from entering to see the daughter of the Messenger of Allah?" Asma' replied, "She had herself ordered me not to allow anyone to enter." Abu Bakr said, "Do what she has ordered you" (Hilyat al-Awliya', Vol. 2, p. 43; Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 3, p. 396; Vol. 4, p. 334; Ansab al-Ashraf, Vol. 1, p. 405; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 4, pp. 1897-1898; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 5, p. 524; Al-Isaba, Vol. 4, pp. 378-379).

Fatima (ع) had also made a request to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) that she must be buried at night, that no one should come to her, that Abu Bakr and Umar should not be notified about her death and burial, and that Abu Bakr should not be allowed to perform the funeral prayer for her.

When she died, Ali washed and buried her in the dark of the night without notifying Abu Bakr and Umar. So, these two were not aware of her burial.

Muhammad ibn Umar al-Waqidi (130/747-207/823) said the following: "It has been proven to us that Ali (ع) performed her funeral prayers and buried her at night accompanied by al-Abbas (ibn Abdul-Muttalib) and (his son) al-Fadl and did not notify anyone."

It was for this reason that the burial place of Fatima (ع) is hidden and is unknown, none alive is sure about it (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 162-163; Al-Musannaf, Vol. 4, p. 141; Ansab al-Ashraf, Vol. 1, pp. 402, 405; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 4, p. 1898; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 5, pp. 524-525; Al-Isaba, Vol. 4, pp. 379-380; al-Tabari, Vol. 3, pp. 2435-2436; Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 8, pp. 19-20; Wafa' al-Wafa', Vol. 3, pp. 901-902, 904, 905; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 16, pp. 279-281).

To attribute this displeasure of Fatima (ع) to sentiments and thereby to lower its importance does not prompt a correct sentiment: If this displeasure had been the result of sentiments, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) would have stopped her from this out-of-place displeasure, but there is no historical record showing that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) took this displeasure to be as such. Besides, how could her displeasure be

the result of personal feelings or sentiments since her pleasure or displeasure always agree with Allah's will? The Prophet's following saying is a proof of this: "O Fatima (ع)! Surely Allah is angered when you are angered and is pleased when you are pleased" (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 153; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 5, p. 522; Al-Isaba, Vol. 4, p. 366; Tahthib al-Tahthib, Vol. 12, p. 441; Al-Khasa'is al-Kubra, Vol. 2, p. 265; Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 13, p. 96; Vol. 16, p. 280; Majma' al-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, p. 203).

A short history of Fadak after the death of Fatima (ع):

The motive which prompts us to pursue the history of Fadak and to extract the series of events after it for a period of three centuries from the texts of historical books is to clarify three issues:

a. The truth about the rule of annulment of inheritance from prophets allegedly made by the Holy Prophet (ص); in other words, the claim that property of the Holy Prophet (ص) is a part of the public treasury and belongs to all Muslims. This was claimed by the first caliph, Abu Bakr, and was rejected by his successors, by both next caliphs (`Umar and Othman), by the Umayyads and the Abbassids. We must consider that the lawfulness and rightfulness of their caliphate depended upon the "correctness" and "lawfulness" of the caliphate of the first caliph and his actions.

b. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and the descendants of Fatima (ع) never had any hesitation regarding the rightfulness and justification of their claim. They emphasized and confirmed that Fatima (ع) had always been right and that Abu Bakr's claim had always been rejected; they did not yield to the false claim.

c. Whenever one of the caliphs made a decision to put Allah's command into effect, with regard to Fadak, to observe justice and equity and to restore the right to the entitled one in conformity with Islamic rules, he used to return Fadak to the descendants of Fatima (ع).

`Umar ibn al-Khattab was the most harsh person in keeping Fatima (ع) from Fadak and her inheritance as he himself confessed: "When the Messenger of Allah died, I came along with Abu Bakr to Ali ibn Abu Talib and said, 'What do you say about what has been left by the Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'We have the most rights with the Holy

Prophet (ص).' I (Umar) said, 'Even those properties of Khaybar?' He said, 'Yes, even those of Khaybar.' I said, 'Even those of Fadak?' He replied, 'Yes, even those of Fadak.' Then I said, 'By Allah! We say NO even if you cut our necks with saws'" (Majma' al-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, pp. 39-40).

As it has been mentioned before, `Umar then took the document (title of ownership) of Fadak and tore it up. But when Umar became caliph (13/634-23/644), he gave Fadak back to inheritors of the Holy Prophet (ص). Yaqut al-Hamawi (574/1178-626/1229), the famous historian and geographer, following the event of Fadak, said the following: "Then, when `Umar ibn al-Khattab became caliph and gained victories and the Muslims secured abundant wealth (i.e. the public treasury satisfied the caliphate's needs), he made his judgement contrary to that of his predecessor. He gave it (Fadak) back to the Prophet's heirs. At the time, Ali ibn Abu Talib and Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib disputed about Fadak."

Ali said that the Holy Prophet (ص) had bestowed it on Fatima (ع) during his lifetime. Abbas denied this and used to say, "This was in the possession of the Holy Prophet (ص) and I have a share in this inheritance." They were disputing this with each other and asked Umar to settle the case. He refused to judge between them and said, "Both of you are more conscious and aware of your problem; but I only give it [Fadak] to you" (Mu'jam al-Buldan, Vol. 4, pp. 238-239; Wafa' al-Wafa', Vol. 3, p. 999; Tahthib al-Lughah, Vol. 10, p. 124; Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 10, p. 473; Taj al-Arus, Vol. 7, p. 166).

The reason why Umar and Abu Bakr were trying to seize Fadak was economic and political, not merely a religious one, as the previous episode shows. When the economic and political condition of the caliphate improved, and when there was no need for the income obtained from Fadak, Omer changed his own decision.

The last part of this historic event has been inserted afterwards to demonstrate the matter of inheritance by the brother or paternal uncle of the deceased when the latter had no sons. This problem is a matter of dispute among Islamic sects. The judicial and jurisprudential discussion is separate from our own goal in the writing of this book. We are only discussing the matter historically.

Abbas had no claim in this case because he had not proven that he had a share in this property, nor did his descendants consider it to be among their own assets even when they [the Abbasides] became caliphs and were ruling the Islamic lands. They either considered themselves as owners of this estate in their capacity as caliphs, or they used to return it to the descendants of Fatima (ع) when they had decided to be just governors.

When Othman ibn Affan became caliph, following the death of Umar (23/644-35/656), he granted Fadak to Marwan ibn al-Hakam, his cousin (Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 6, p. 301; Wafa' al-Wafa', Vol. 3, p. 1000; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 1, p. 198) and this was one of the causes of hostile feelings among the Muslims against `Othman (Al-Ma'arif, Ibn Qutaybah, p. 195; Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, pp. 283, 435; Tarikh, Abul-Fida', Vol. 1, p. 168; Tarikh, Ibn al-Wardi, Vol. 1, p. 204) which ended in the rebellion against him and in his murder. "While previously Fatima (ع) used to claim it, sometimes as her inheritance and sometimes as a gift (from her father), she was driven away from it (Fadak) as Ibn Abul-Hadid said" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha). In this way, Fadak fell into the possession of Marwan. He used to sell its crops and products for at least ten thousand dinars per year. If in some years its income decreased, this drop was not made public. This was its usual profit till the time of the caliphate of Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz (in 100/718) (Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 5, pp. 286, 287; Subh al-A'sha, Vol. 4, p. 291).

When Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan became caliph (41/661-60/680), he became partner with Marwan and others in Fadak. He allotted one third to Marwan, one third to Amr son of Othman ibn Affan and one third to his own son Yazid. This was after the death of al-Hassan ibn Ali (ع). "In order to cause the anger of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (ص), as al-Ya`qubi states on p. 199, Vol. 2 of his Tarikh, it remained in the possession of the three above-mentioned persons tlil Marwan became caliph (64/684-65/685); he took full possession of it. Then he doled it out to his two sons, Abdul-Malik and Abdul-Aziz. Then Abdul-Aziz doled out his share to his son (`Umar ibn Abdul-Azīz).

When Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz became caliph (99/717-101/720), he delivered a sermon once in which he said, "Verily, Fadak was among the things that Allah had bestowed on His Messenger and no horse, nor camel was stirred for it." He mentioned the history of the case of Fadak during the past caliphates till he said the following: "Then Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] gave it (Fadak) to my father and to Abdul-Malik. It became mine

as well as al-Walid's and Sulayman's (two sons). When al-Walid became caliph (86/705-96/715), I asked him for his share and he gave it to me. I also asked for Sulayman's share and he, too, gave it to me. Then I gathered the three parts and I then possessed no property more dear to me than it. Testify that I returned it to its original condition." He wrote to his governor of Medina (Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Amr ibn Hazm) ordering him to carry out what he had declared in the sermon which he had delivered. Then Fadak went back to the possession of the children of Fatima (ع). "This was the first removal of oppression by returning it (Fadak) to the children of Ali" (Al-Awa'il, Abu Hilal al-Askari, p. 209). They possessed it during the reign of this caliph [Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz].

When Yazid ibn Abdul-Malik became caliph (101/720-105/724), he seized Fadak and they (the children of Ali) were again dispossessed. It fell into the possession of the children of Marwan as it had been previously. They passed it from one to another tlil their caliphate expired; it was then that it passed away to Banu al-Abbas.

When "Abul-Abbas" Abdullah as-Saffah became the first caliph of the Abbasid dynasty (132/749-136/754), he gave Fadak back to the children of Fatima (ع), handing it over to Abdullah ibn al-Hassan ibn al-Hassan [known as al-Hassan al-Muthanna or al-Hassan II] ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib(ع). When "Abu Ja`far" Abdullah al-Mansur ad-Dawaniqi (136/754-158/775) became caliph, he seized Fadak from the children of al-Hassan (ع). When Muhammad al-Mahdi, son of al-Mansur, became caliph (158/775-169/785), he returned Fadak to the children of Fatima (ع). Then Musa al-Hadi ibn al-Mahdi (169/785-170/786) and his brother Harun ar-Rashid (170/786-193/809) confiscated it from the descendants of Fatima (ع), and it found itself in the possession of Banu al-Abbas till the time when al-Ma'mun became caliph (193/813-218/833). Al-Ma'mun al-Abbasi gave it back to the descendants of Fatima (ع) (210/826). It is narrated through al-Mahdi ibn Sabiq that al-Ma'mun one day sat to hear the complaints of the people and to judge in their disputes. The first complaint which he received caused him to weep upon considering it. When he asked where the attorney for the children of Fatima (ع) daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص) was, an old man stood up and came forth. He argued with him about Fadak, and al-Ma'mun, too, argued till he won the argument over al-Ma'mun (Al-Awa'il, p. 209). Al-Ma'mun summoned the Islamic faqihs and questioned them about the claim of Banu Fatima (ع). They narrated to al-Ma'mun saying that the Holy

Prophet (ص) gave Fadak to Fatima (ع) as a gift and that after the death of the Holy Prophet (ص), Fatima (ع) demanded Abu Bakr to return Fadak to her. He asked her to bring witnesses to her claim regarding this gift. She brought Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and Umm Ayman as her witnesses. They testified in the case in her favor. Abu Bakr rejected their testimony. Then al-Ma'mun asked the Islamic faqihs: "What is your view about Umm Ayman?" They replied, "She is a woman to whom the Holy Prophet (ص) testified that she is a resident of Paradise." Al-Ma'mun disputed at length with them and forced them to accept his argument. They finally confessed that Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and Umm Ayman had testified only to the truth. When they unanimously adopted this stand, he restored Fadak to the descendants of Fatima (ع) (Tarikh, al-Ya`qubi, Vol. 3, pp. 195-196).

Then al-Ma'mun ordered the estate (of Fadak) to be registered among the property (of the descendants of Fatima [ع]), and it was registered; al-Ma'mun signed it. Then he wrote a letter to his governor in Medina, namely Qutham ibn Ja`far, as follows:

Be informed that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), exercising the authority vested upon him by the divine religion as the Caliph, successor and kinsman of the Holy Prophet (ص), has considered himself more deserving to follow the precedent of the Holy Prophet (ص) and to carry out his commands. And (the chief is more entitled) to restore to the rightful persons any endowment gifted by the Holy Prophet (ص) or anything which the Holy Prophet (ص) had gifted to anyone. The success and safeguarding of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is done by Allah, and he is particularly anxious to act in a way which would win the pleasure of the Almighty for him. Verily, the Holy Prophet (ص) had gifted the estate of Fadak to his daughter Fatima (ع). He had transferred its ownership to her. It is a clear and an established fact. None of the kindred of the Holy Prophet (ص) have any difference of view in this regard. Fatima (ع) always claimed that which was more deserving (to be justified) than the person (Abu Bakr) whose word was accepted. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (عn) considers it right and proper to restore Fadak to the heirs of Fatima (ع). He would hereby win nearness to Allah Almighty by establishing His justice and right. It will win the appreciation of the Holy Prophet (ص) by carrying into effect his commandments. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib

(ع) has commanded that this restoration of Fadak should duly be registered. This command should be transmitted to all the officials.

Then, if, as it was a custom to proclaim on every hajj gathering (every year), following the death of the Holy Prophet (ص), that anyone to whom the Holy Prophet (ص) had promised by way of a gift or a present should come forward, his statement will be accepted and the promise will thus be fulfilled. Certainly, Fatima (ع) had a superior right to have her statements accepted in the matter of the gifting of Fadak by the Holy Prophet (ص) to her.

Verily, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has commanded his slave Mubarak al-Tabari to restore Fadak to the descendants of Fatima (ع) the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ص) with all its borders, rights and slaves attached thereto, cereal crops and other things.

The same has been restored to Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn al-Hassan ibn Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and Muhammad ibn `Abdullah ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has appointed both of them as the agents representing the owners of the lands: the heirs of Fatima (ع). Be then informed that this is the view of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and that Allah has inspired him to obey the order of Allah and to win His pleasure and the pleasure of the Holy Prophet (ص). Let also your subordinates know this. Behave towards Muhammad ibn Yahya and Muhammad ibn Abdillah in the same manner as you used to behave towards Mubarak al-Tabari. Help them both to everything which has anything to do with its flourishing and prosperity, its improvement in abundance of cereals by Allah's will, and that is the end of the matter.

Written this Wednesday, two nights past Dhul-Qi`dah, in the year 210 (February 15, 826 A.D.).

During the period of al-Ma'mun's caliphate, Fadak was in the possession of Fatima's descendants. This continued during the caliphate of al-Mu'tasim (218/833-227/842) and that of al-Wathiq (227/842-232/847).

When Ja`far al-Mutawakkil became caliph (232/847-247/861), the one among them who was marked as an arch-enemy of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (ص), both of those alive and of those dead, gave the order to re-seize Fadak from the descendants of Fatima (ع). He seized it and gave it to Harmalah al-Hajjam (the cupper). After the death of al-Hajjam, he gave it to al-Bazyar (the falconer, a native of Tabaristan) (Kashf al-Ghumma, Vol. 2, pp. 121-122; Bihar al-Anwar, [1st ed.], Vol. 8, p. 108; Safinat al-Bihar, Vol. 2, p. 351). Abu Hilal al-'Askari mentioned that his name was `Abdullah ibn `Umar al-Bazyar and added: "... And there were in it (Fadak) eleven date-palm trees which the Holy Prophet (ص) had planted with his own hands. The descendants of Abu Talib used to gather these dates. When pilgrims (hujjaj) entered Medina, these descendants donated the dates to them. Through this, they received a considerable return. This news reached al-Mutawakkil. He ordered Abdullah ibn Umar to gather the fruits and to squeeze the juice from them. Abdullah ibn Umar sent a man named Bishr ibn Umayyah ath-Thaqafi who squeezed the fruits. It was reported that he made it into wine. It had not reached Basra (on its way to the caliph) before it decayed, and by then al-Mutawakkil was killed (Al-Awa'il, p. 209). When al-Mutawakkil was killed and al-Muntasir (his son) succeeded him (247/861-248/862), the latter gave the order to restore Fadak to the descendants of al-Hassan and al-Hussain (ع) and delivered the donations of Abu Talib to them; this was in 248/862. (Ref. Nos. 3-13, Fath al-Buldan, Vol. 1, pp. 33-38; Mu'jam al-Buldan, Vol. 4, pp. 238-240; Tarikh, al-Ya`qubi, Vol. 2, p. 199; Vol. 3, pp. 48, 195-196; Al-Kamil, Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 2, pp. 224-225; Vol. 3, pp. 457, 497; Vol. 5, p. 63; Vol. 7, p. 116; Al-`Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, pp. 216, 283, 435; Wafa' al-Wafa', Vol. 3, pp. 999-1000; Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Vol. 5, pp. 286-287; Tarikh al-Khulafa', pp. 231-232, 356; Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol. 4, p. 82; Sirat Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz, Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 110; Subh al-A'sha, Vol. 4, p. 291; Jamharat Rasa'il al-`Arab, Vol. 2, pp. 331-332; Vol. 3, pp. 509-510; A'lam an-Nisa', Vol. 3, pp. 1211-1212; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 16, pp. 277-278; Al-Awa'il, p. 209; Kashf al-Ghumma, Vol. 2, pp. 120-122; Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 8, pp. 107-108).

It seemed that Fadak was re-seized from the descendants of Fatima (ع) after the death of al-Muntasir (248-862) because "Abul-Hassan" Ali ibn Isa al-Irbili (d. 692/1293) stated that al-Mu'tadid (279/892-289/902) returned Fadak to the descendants of Fatima (ع). Then he mentioned that al-Muqtafi (289/902-295/908) seized it from them. It is

said also that al-Muqtadir (295/908-320/932) returned it to them (the descendants of Fatima [ع]) (Kashf al-Ghumma, Vol. 2, p. 122; Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 8, p. 108; Safina, Vol. 2, p. 351).

After this long period of re-seizing and restoring, Fadak was returned to the possession of the usurpers and their heirs. It seems there is no further mention that such changing hands was ever made in history, and the curtain fell. "Is it then that the judgement of (the times of pagan) ignorance that they desire? And who (else) can be better than Allah to judge for a people of assured faith?" (Holy Quran, 5: 50).

Letter 46

To One of his Officers

Now, you are surely one of those whose help I accept in establishing religion and with those help I break the haughtiness of the sinful and guard critical borders. You should seek Allah's help in whatever causes you anxiety. Add a little harshness to the mixture of leniency and remain lenient where leniency is more appropriate. Adopt harshness when you cannot do without harshness. Bend your wings (in humbleness) before the subjects. Meet them with your face broad and keep yourself lenient (in behavior) with them. Treat them equally in looking at them with half eyes or full eyes, in signaling and in greeting so that the great should not expect transgression on your part and the weak should not lose hope in your justice, and that is the end of the matter.

Will 47

For Imam Al-hasan and Imam al-Hussain (ع) When (`Abd ar-Rahman) Ibn Muljim (the Curse of Allah be upon him) Struck Him Fatally with His Sword

I admonish you (both) to fear Allah and not to hanker after the (pleasures of this) world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you may have been denied. Speak the truth and deed (in expectation) for [the divine] reward. Be an enemy of the oppressor and the helper of the oppressed.

I admonish you (both) as well as all my children and the members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches to fear Allah, to keep your affairs in order and to maintain good relations among

yourselves for I have heard your grandfather (the Holy Prophet [ص]) saying, "Improvement of mutual differences is better than general prayers and fast."

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Him in view with regard to orphans. So, do not allow them to starve, and they should not be ruined in your presence.

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Him in view with regard to your neighbors because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice. He went on advising in their favor till we thought he would allow them to inherit them.

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Him in view with regard to the issue of the Holy Quran. No one should excel you in acting upon it.

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Him in view in the matter of prayer because it is the pillar of your religion.

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Him in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka`ba). Do not forsake it so long as you live because if it is abandoned, you will not be spared.

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Him in view in the matter of jihad with the help of your property, lives and tongues in the way of Allah.

You should maintain respect for kinship and spend on others. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations. Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, then if you pray, your prayers will not be answered.

Then he said the following: O sons of `Abdul-Muttalib! Certainly I do not wish to see you plunging harshly into the blood of Muslims shouting that Ali ibn Abu Talib has been killed. Beware! Do not kill on my account except the one who kills me.

Wait till I die by his (Ibn Muljim's) existing stroke. Then strike him one single stroke for his single stroke and do not dismember the limbs of the man, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying, "Avoid cutting limbs even though it may be those of a rabid dog."

Letter 48

To Mu`awiyah

Surely, rebellion and falsehood abase a man in his religious as well as worldly matters and manifest his shortcomings before his critic. You know that you cannot take hold of what is destined to remain away from you. Many people had aims other than right (ones) and swear by Allah (that they will attain their goal), but He proved them wrong. Therefore, fear the Day when happy is whoever made his end happy (by good actions) while repentant is whoever allowed Satan to lead him and did not resist him. You called us to a settlement through the Holy Quran although you were not a man of the Holy Quran; we responded to the Holy Quran through its judgement and not to you, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 49

To Mu`awiyah

This world turns away from the next. Whoever is devoted to it achieves nothing from it except that it increases his greed and coveting. Whoever is devoted to it is not satisfied with what he gets from it because of what he has not had. Eventually, there will be a separation from what has been amassed and a breaking of what has been strengthened. If you learn a lesson from the past, you can be safe in the future, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 50

To the Officers of His Army

From the servant of Allah, Ali ibn Abu Talib, to the Officer-in-charge of garrisons:

It is obligatory on an officer that the distinction which he achieves, or the wealth with which he has been exclusively endowed, should not make him change his behavior towards those under him, and that the riches which Allah has bestowed on him should increase him in nearness to his people and kindness to his brethren.

Beware that it is obligatory on me that I should not keep anything secret from you except during war time, nor should I decide any matter without consulting you except with regard to the commands of the creed, nor should I ignore the fulfillment of any of your rights, nor should I desist till I discharge it fully, and that for me all of you should be equal in rights. Once I have done all this, it becomes obligatory on you to thank Allah for this bounty and to obey me, and you should not hold back when called upon, nor should you jeopardize your good deeds. You should face hardships for the sake of what is right. If you do not remain steadfast in this, there will be no one more humiliated in my view than the one among you who has deviated, then I will increase his penalty wherein no one will get any concession from me. Take this (pledge) from your (subordinate) officers and accord to them such behavior from your side by which Allah may improve your matters, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 51

To His (Land) Tax Collectors :

From the servant of Allah, Ali ibn Abu Talib, to the tax collectors:

Whoever does not fear where he is going does not send forward for himself that which can protect him. You should know that the obligations laid on you are few, while their reward is much. Even if there had been no fear of punishment for rebellion and disobedience, which Allah has prohibited, the reward in keeping aloof from it will be enough (incentive) to abstain from going after it. Conduct yourselves justly with the people and deel with them with endurance with regard to their needs because you are the treasurers of the people, the representatives of the community and the ambassadors of the Imams.

Do not deprive anyone of his needs and do not prevent him from (securing) his requirements. For the collection of tax (khiraj) from the people, do not sell their winter or summer clothes nor cattle with which they work nor slaves. Do not whip anyone for the sake of one dirham. Do not touch the property of any person whether he be one who prays (a Muslim), or a protected unbeliever, unless you find a horse or weapons used to attack the Muslims because it is not proper for the Muslims to leave these things in the hands of the enemies of Islam to enable them to have power over Islam.

Do not deny good counsel to yourself, good behavior to the army, succour to the subjects and strength to the religion of Allah. Strive in the way of Allah as is obligatory on you because Allah, the Glorified One, desires us and you to be thankful to Him as best as we can and that we should support His Cause to the best of our ability. And there is no power save with Allah, the all-High, the all-Glorious.

Letter 52

To the Governors of Various Places Concerning Prayers

Offer the zuhr (noon) prayers with the people when the shade of the wall of the goats' pen is equal to the wall. Offer the asr (afternoon) prayers with them when the sun is still shining in a portion of the day enough for covering the distance of two farasangs (about six miles). Offer the maghrib (sunset) prayers when whoever is fasting ends the fast and the pilgrim rushes (from Arafat) to Mina. Offer the isha' (evening) prayers with them when twilight disappears and upto one third of the night. Say the (early) morning prayers with them when a man can recognize the face of his companion. Say the prayers with the people as the weakest of them would do, and do not be a source of trouble to them.

Document[1] Of Instruction 53

Written for (Malik) al-Ashtar an-Nakh`i, when the status of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr had become precarious and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had appointed al-Ashtar as the Governor of Egypt and the surrounding areas. It is the longest document and contains the greatest number of beautiful statements :

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

This is what Allah's servant Ali ibn Abu Talib has ordered Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar in his instrument (of appointment) for him when he made him Governor of Egypt for the collection of its revenues, fighting its enemies, seeking the good of its people and making its cities prosperous.

He has ordered him to fear Allah, to prefer obedience to Him and to follow what He has commanded in His Book (Holy Quran) out of His obligatory and elective commands, without following which one cannot achieve virtue, nor (can one) be evil save by opposing them and ignoring

them and to support the cause of Allāh the Glorified One, with his heart, hand and tongue because Allah Whose name is Sublime takes the responsibility for helping him who helps Him and for protecting him who gives Him support.

He also orders him to break his heart off from passions and to restrain it at the time of their increase because the heart leads towards evil unless Allah has mercy.

Qualifications of a Governor and his Responsibilities :

Then, know, O Malik, that I have sent you to an area where there have been governments before you, both just as well as oppressive. People would now watch your dealings as you used to watch the dealings of the rulers before you and they (people) would criticize you as you criticized them (rulers). Surely, the virtuous are known by the reputation that Allah circulates for them through the tongues of His creatures. Therefore, the best collection with you should be the collection of good deeds. So, control your passions and check your heart from doing what is not lawful for you because checking the heart means detaining it just half way between what it likes and dislikes.

Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them since they are of two kinds: either your brethren in religion or your likes in creation. They would commit slips and encounter mistakes. They may act wrongly, wilfully or out of negligence. So, extend to them your forgiveness and pardon them in the same way as you would like Allah to extend His forgiveness and to pardon you because you are over them and your responsible Commander (Imam) is over you, while Allah is over the one who appointed you. He (Allah) has sought you to manage their affairs and tried you through them.

Do not set yourself to fight Allah because you have no power to meet His power and you cannot do without His pardon and mercy. Do not regret forgiving or being merciful in punishing. Do not act hastily during your anger if you can find a way out of it. Do not say: “I have been given authority, I enjoy it when I order,” because it engenders confusion in the heart, weakens the religion and takes one to his ruin. If the authority in which you are placed produces pride or vanity in you, look at the greatness of the realm of Allah over you and His might the like of which you do not even possess over yourselves. This will curb your haughtiness,

cure you of your high temper and bring back to you your wisdom which had gone away from you.

Beware of comparing yourself to Allah in His greatness or likening yourself to Him in His power, for Allah humiliates every claimant of power and disgraces everyone who is haughty.

Do justice for Allah, and do justice towards the people, as against your own selves, your near ones and those of your subjects for whom you have a liking because if you do not do so, you will be oppressive, and when a person oppresses the servants of Allah, instead of His creatures, Allah becomes his opponent and when Allah is the opponent of a person He tramples his plea, and we would remain in the status of being at war with Allah till he gives it up and repents. Nothing is more inducive to the reversal of Allah's bounty or for the hastening of His retribution than continuance in oppression because Allah hears the prayer of the oppressed and is on the look out for the oppressors.

Ruling should be in favor of the people as a whole .

The way most coveted by you should be that which is the most equitable for what is right, the most universal by way of justice and the most comprehensive with regard to the agreement with those under you because the disagreement among the common people sweeps away the arguments of the chiefs and can be disregarded when compared with the agreement of the common people. No one among those under you is more burdensome to the ruler in the comfort of life, less helpful in distress, more disliking of equitable treatment, more tricky in asking favors, less thankful at the time of giving, less appreciative of reasons at the time of refusal and weaker in endurance at the time of the discomforts of life than the chiefs. It is the common people of the community who are the pillars of the religion, the power of the Muslims and the defence against the enemies. Your learning should, therefore, be towards them and your inclination with them.

The one among the people under you who is furthest from you and the worst of them in your view should be whoever is the most inquisitive of the shortcomings of the people because people do have shortcomings and the ruler is the most appropriate person to cover them. Do not disclose whatever of it is hidden from you because your obligation is to correct what is manifest to you, while Allah will deal with whatever is hidden from you. Therefore, cover shortcomings as far as you can; Allah will cover those of your shortcomings which you will like to remain

under cover from your subjects. Unfasten every knot of hatred in the people and cut away from yourself the cause of every enmity. Feign ignorance from what is not clear to you. Do not hasten to second a backbiter because a backbiter is a cheat although he looks like those who wish well.

About Counselors

Do not include among those whom you consult a miser who would keep you back from being generous and caution you against destitution, nor a coward who would make you feel too weak for your affairs, nor a greedy person who would beautify for you the collection of wealth by evil means. This is so because although miserliness, cowardice and greed are different qualities, yet they are common in having a wrong idea about Allah.

The worst minister for you is one who has been a minister for mischievous persons before you and who joined them in committing sins. Therefore, he should not be your chief man because they are abettors of sinners and brothers of the oppressors. You can find good substitutes for them who would be like them in their views and influence while not being like them in committing sins and vices. They have never assisted an oppressor in his oppression or a sinner in his sins. They would give you the least trouble and the best support. They would be most considerate towards you and the least inclined towards others. Therefore, make them your chief companions in privacy as well as in public.

Then, more preferable among them for you should be those who openly speak better truths before you and who support you the least in those of your actions which Allah does not approve in His friends, even though they may be according to your wishes. Associate yourself with God-fearing and truthful people; then educate them, so that they should not praise you or please you by reason of an action which you did not perform because an excess of praise produces pride and drives you nearer to haughtiness.

The virtuous and the vicious should not be in equal status before you because this means dissuasion of the virtuous from virtue and persuasion of the vicious to vice. Keep everyone in the status which is his. You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behavior towards them, lighten their hardships and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles. You should, therefore, in this way follow a course by which you

would leave a good impression with your subjects. This is so because such good ideas would relieve you of great worries. Certainly, the most appropriate for your good impression is he to whom your behavior has not been good.

Do not discontinue the good lives in which the earlier people of this community had been acting and by virtue of which there was general unity and through which the subjects prospered. Do not innovate any line of action which injures these earlier ways because (in that case) the reward for those who had established those ways would continue, but the burden for discontinuing them would be on you. Keep on increasing your conversations with the scholars and discussions with the wise in order to stabilize the prosperity of the areas under you and to continue with that in which the earlier people had remained steadfast.

The different classes of people:

Be informed that people consist of classes who prosper only with the help of one another and they are not independent of one another. Among them are the army of Allah, then the secretarial workers of the common people and the chiefs, then the dispensers of justice, then those engaged in enforcing law and order, then the payers of head tax (jizya) and land tax (khiraj) from the protected unbelievers and the common Muslims, then there are the traders and the men of industry, then the lowest class of the needy and the destitute. Allah has fixed the share of each one of them and laid down His precepts about the limits of each in His Book (Holy Quran) and in the Sunnah of His Prophet (ص) by way of a settlement which is preserved with us.

The army is, by the will of Allāh, the fortress of the subjects, the ornament of the ruler, the strength of the religion and the means of achieving peace. The subjects cannot exist without them while the army can be maintained only by the funds fixed by Allah in the revenues through which they acquire the strength to fight the enemies, on which they depend for their prosperity and with which they meet their needs. These two classes cannot exist without the third class, namely: the judges, the executives and the secretaries who pass judgements about contracts, collect revenues and are depended upon in special and general matters.

And these classes cannot exist except with the traders and men of industry who provide necessities for them, establish markets and make it possible for others not to do all this with their own hands. Then comes the

lowest class of the needy and the destitute. Support and help for them is an obligation, and everyone of them has (a share in) livelihood in the Name of Allah. Everyone of them has a right on the ruler according to what is needed for his prosperity. The ruler cannot acquit himself of the obligations laid on him by Allah in this matter except by striving and seeking help from Allah,October 18, 2003 by training himself to adhere to righteousness and by enduring on that account all that is light or hard.

1. The Army

Put in command of your forces the man who in your view is the best well-wisher of Allah, His Prophet (ص) and your Imam. The most chaste of them in heart and the highest of them in endurance is one who is slow in getting angry, who accepts excuses, who is kind to the weak and is strict with the strong; violence should not raise his temper and weakness should not keep him sitting.

Also associate with considerate people from high families, virtuous houses and decent traditions, then people of courage, valor, generosity and benevolence because they are repositories of honor and springs of virtues. Strive for their matters as the parents strive for their child. Do not regard anything that you do to strengthen them as big nor anything that you have agreed to do for them as little, even though it may be small because this would make them your well-wishers and create a good impression about you. Do not neglect to attend to their small matters. Confine yourself to their important matters because your small favors will also be of benefit to them while the important ones are such that they cannot ignore.

That commander of the army should have such a status before you that he renders help to them equitably and spends from his money on them and on those of their families who remain behind so that all their worries converge on the one worry to fight the enemy. Your kindness to them would turn their hearts to you. The most pleasant thing for the rulers is the establishment of justice in their areas and the manifestation of the love of their subjects, but the subjects' love manifests itself only when their hearts are clean. Their good wishes prove correct only when they surround their commanders (to protect them). Do not regard their positions to be a burden over them and do not keep watching for the end of their tenure. Therefore, be broad-minded with regard to their desires, continue to praise them and recount the good deeds of those who have shown such deeds because the mention of good deeds shakes the brave and rouses the weak, if Allah so wills.

Appreciate the performance of each and every one of them. Do not attribute the performance of one to the other and do not minimize the reward below the level of the performance. The high status of a man should not lead you to regard his small deeds as big, nor should the low status of a man make you regard his big deeds as small.

Refer to Allah and His Prophet (ص) the affairs which worry you and the matters which seem to confuse you because, addressing the people whom Allah the Sublime wishes to guide, He said the following: "O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Prophet (ص) and those vested with authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Prophet (ص) if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day (of Judgement)" (Holy Quran, 4: 59).

Referring to Allah means acting according to what is clear in His Book, and referring to the Prophet (ص) means following his unanimously agreed upon Sunnah with regard to which there are no differences.

2. The Chief Judge [Supreme Court Justice]

For the settlement of disputes among people, select one who is the most distinguished among your subjects in your view. The cases (coming before him) should not vex him, disputation should not enrage him. He should not insist on any wrong point and should not hesitate to accept the truth when he perceives it; he should not lean towards greed and should not content himself with a cursory understanding (of a matter) without going thoroughly into it. He should be most ready to stop (to ponder) on doubtful points, most considerate of arguments, least disgusted at the quarrel of litigants, most patient at probing into matters and most fearless at the time of passing a judgement. Praise should not make him vain and elation should not make him lean (toward any side). Such people are very few.

Then, very often check his decisions and allow him so much money (as remuneration) that he has no excuse worth hearing (for not being honest) and there remains no occasion for him to go to others for his needs. Give him that rank in your audience for which no one else among your chiefs aspires so that he may remain safe from the harm of those around you. You should have a piercing eye in this matter because this religion has formerly been a prisoner in the hands of vicious persons when action was taken according to passion and worldly wealth was sought.

3. Executive Officers

Look into the affairs of your executives. Give them appointment after testing them and do not appoint them according to partiality or favoritism because these two things make up the sources of injustice and unfairness. Select from among them those who are people of experience and modesty, hailing from virtuous houses, having been previously in Islam because such persons possess high manners and untarnished honor. They are the least inclined towards greed and always have their eyes on the ends of matters.

Give them an abundant livelihood (by way of salary) because this gives them the strength to maintain themselves in order and not to have an eye upon the funds in their custody and it will be an argument against them if they disobeyed your orders or misappropriated your trust. You should also check their activities and assign people to report on them who should be truthful and faithful because your watching their actions secretly would urge them to preserve trust with and to be kind to the people. Be careful of assistants. If any one of them extends his hands towards misappropriation and the reports of your reporters reaching you confirm it, that should be regarded as sufficient testimony. You should then inflict corporal punishment on him and recover what he has misappropriated. You should put him in a place of disgrace, blacklist him with (the charge of) misappropriation and make him wear the necklace of shame for his offence.

4. The Administration of Revenues

Look after the revenue (khiraj, land tax) affairs in such a way that those engaged in it remain prosperous because in their prosperity lies the prosperity of all others. The others cannot prosper without them because all people are dependent on the revenue and on its payers. You should also keep an eye on the cultivation of the land more than on the collection of revenue because revenue cannot be obtained without cultivation and whoever asks for revenue without cultivation ruins the area and brings death to the people. His rule will not last but only for a moment.

If they complain of the heaviness (of the revenue) or of diseases, or of scarcity of water, or of an excess of water, or of a change in the condition of the land either due to flood or to drought..., you should remit the revenue to the extent that you hope would improve their status. The remission granted by you for the removal of distress from them should not be grudged by you because it is an investment which they will return to

you in the shape of the prosperity of your country and the progress of your domain in addition to earning their praise and happiness for meting out justice to them. You can depend upon their strength because of the investment made by you in them through catering to their convenience and can have confidence in them because of the justice extended to them by being kind to them. After that, circumstances may so turn that you may have a need for their assistance. It is then that they will bear it happily, for prosperity is capable of bearing whatever you load on it. The ruin of the land is caused by the poverty of the cultivators, while the cultivators become poor when the officers concentrate on the collection (of money), having little hope for continuance (in their posts) and deriving no benefit from warnings.

5. The Clerical Establishment

Then you should take care of your secretarial workers. Put the best of them in charge of your affairs. Entrust those of your writings which contain your policies and secrets to him who possesses the best character, who is not elated by honors lest he should dare speak against you in public. He should also not be negligent in presenting the communications of your officers before you and issuing correct replies to them on your behalf and in matters of your receipts and payments. He should not make any damaging agreement on your behalf and should not fail in repudiating an agreement against you. He should not be ignorant of the extent of his own status in matters because whoever is ignorant of his own status is (even) more ignorant of the status of others.

Your selection of these people should not be on the basis of your understanding (of them), confidence and good impression because people catch the ideas of the officers through affectation and personal service, and there is nothing in it which is like well-wishing or trustfulness. You should rather test them by what they did under the virtuous people before you. Take a decision in favor of one who has a good name among the common people and is the most renowned in trustworthiness because this will be a proof of your regard for Allah and for him on whose behalf you have been appointed to this status (namely your Imam). Establish one chief for every department of work. He should not be incapable of big matters and a rush of work should not perplex him. Whenever there is a defect in your secretaries which you overlook, then you will be held responsible for it.

6. Traders and Industrialists

Take some advice about traders and industrialists. Give them good counsel whether they are settled (shop-keepers) or traders or physical laborers because they are the sources of profit and the means of the provision of useful items. They bring them from distant and far-flung areas throughout the land and the sea, the plains or the mountains, from where people cannot come and to where they do not dare to go, for they are peaceful and there is no fear of rebellion from them and they are quite without fear of treason.

Look after their affairs before those of your own wherever they may be in your land. Be informed, along with this, that most of them are very narrow-minded and awfully avaricious. They hoard goods for profiteering and fixing high prices for goods. This is a source of harm to the people and a blot on the officers in charge. Stop people from hoarding because the Messenger of Allah (ص) has prohibited it. The sale should be smooth, with correct weights and prices, not harmful to either party, the seller or the buyer; whoever commits hoarding after you prohibit it, give him exemplary but not excessive punishment.

7. The Lowest Class

(Fear) Allah and keep Him in view with regard to the lower class which consists of those who have few means: the poor, the destitute, the penniless and the disabled because in this class are both the discontented and those who beg. Take care for the sake of Allah of His obligations towards them for which He has made you responsible. Fix for them a share from the public funds and a share from the crops of lands taken over as booty for Islam in every area because in it the remote ones have the same shares as the near ones. All these people are those whose rights have been placed in your charge. Therefore, a luxurious life should not keep you away from them. You cannot be excused for ignoring small matters simply because you were deciding big ones. Consequently, do not be unmindful of them, nor should you turn your face away from them out of vanity.

Take care of the affairs of those of them who do not approach you because they are of unsightly appearance or those whom people regard as low. Appoint for them some trusted people who are God-fearing and humble. They should inform you of these people's conditions. Then deal with them with a sense of responsibility to Allah on the Day you will meet Him because of all the subjects these people are the most worthy of

an equitable treatment, while for others also you should fulfil their rights so as to render account to Allah.

Take care of the orphans and the aged who have no means (for livelihood) nor are they ready for begging. This is heavy on the officers; in fact, every obligation is heavy. Allah lightens it for those who seek the next world, so they endure (hardships) upon themselves and trust on the truthfulness of Allah's promise to them. And fix a time for complainants wherein you make yourself free for them and sit with them in common audience and feel humble for the sake of Allah Who created you. (On that occasion) you should keep away your army and assistants such as the guards and the police so that anyone who likes to speak may speak to you without fear because I have heard the Messenger of Allah say in more than one place, "The people among whom the right of the weak is not secured from the strong without fear will never achieve purity." Tolerate their awkwardness and inability to speak. Keep away from you narrowness and haughtiness; by the will of Allah, on this account spread over you the covers of His mercy and be optimistic of the reward of His obedience. Whatever you give, give it joyfully, but when you refuse, do it handsomely and with apologies.

Then there are certain matters which you cannot avoid performing yourself. For example, relying on your officers when your secretaries are unable to do so, or tending to the complaints of the people when your assistants refrain. Finish every day the work meant for it because every day has its own work. Keep for yourself the better and greater portion of these periods for the worship of Allah, although all these items are for Allah provided the intention is pure and the subjects prosper thereby.

Communion with Allah

The particular thing by which you should purify your religion for Allah should be the fulfillment of those obligations which are especially for Him. Therefore, devote to Allah some of your physical activity during the night and the day and whatever (worship) you perform for seeking nearness to Allah should be complete, without defect or deficiency, no matter what physical exertion it may involve. When you lead the prayers for the people, it should be neither (too long as to be) boring nor (too short as to be) wasteful because among the people there are the sick as well as those who have needs of their own. When the Messenger of Allah (ص) sent me to Yemen, I inquired how I should pray with them and he

replied, “Say the prayers as the weakest of them will say, and be considerate of the believers.

On the Behavior and Action of a Ruler

Do not stay secluded from the public for a long time because the seclusion of those in authority from the subjects is a norm of narrow-sightedness, and it causes ignorance of their affairs. Seclusion from them also prevents them from the knowledge of those things which they need to know. As a result, they begin to regard big matters as small and small matters as big, good matters as bad and bad matters as good, while the truth is confused with falsehood. After all, a governor is a human being and cannot have knowledge of things which people keep hidden from him.

No writ is big on the face of truth to differentiate its various expressions from falsehood. You can be one of two kinds of men: If you are generous in granting rights, why this hiding in spite of (your) discharging the obligations and good deeds which you perform? Or you may be a victim of miserliness. In that case, people will soon give up asking you since they will lose hope of a generous treatment from you. In spite of that, there are many needs of the people towards you which do not involve any hardship on you, such as the complaint against oppression or the request for justice in a case.

Furthermore, a governor has favorites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things. They are high-handed and do not observe justice in matters. You should destroy the root of evil in the people by cutting away the causes of these defects. Do not make any land grants to your hangers-on or supporters. They should not expect from you the possession of land which may cause harm to adjoining people over the question of irrigation or public services whose burden the grantees place on others. In this way, the benefit will be rather theirs than yours and the blame will lie on you in this world as well as in the next.

Effect equity to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. In this matter, you should be enduring and watchful even though it may involve your relatives and favorites. Keep in view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you because its reward is surely handsome.

If the subjects suspect you of high-handedness, explain to them your status publicly and remove their suspicion with such an explanation

because this will mean an exercise for your soul and a consideration for the subjects while this explanation will secure your aim of keeping them firm in the truth.

Do not reject peace to which your enemy may invite you and wherein there is the pleasure of Allah because peace brings rest to your army, relief from your worries and safety for your country. But after peace there is a great apprehension from the enemy because often the enemy offers peace in order to benefit from your negligence and relaxation. Therefore, be cautious and do not act according to your wishful thinking in this regard.

If you conclude an agreement between yourself and your enemy or enter into a pledge, fulfil your agreement and carry out your pledge faithfully. Place yourself as a shield against whatever you have pledged because among the obligations of Allah there is nothing on which people are more strongly united, despite the difference of their ideas and variation of their views, than respect for fulfilling pledges. Besides Muslims, even unbelievers have abided by agreements because they realized the dangers which will come in the wake of the violation thereof. Therefore, do not deceive your enemy because no one can offend Allah save the ignorant and the wicked. Allah made His agreement and pledged the sign of security which He has spread over His creatures through His mercy and an asylum in which they stay in His protection and seek the benefit of nearness to Him. Hence, there should be no deception, cunning or duplicity in it.

Do not enter into an agreement which may admit different interpretations and do not change the interpretation of vague words after the conclusion and confirmation (of the agreement). If an agreement of Allah involves you in hardship, do not seek its repudiation without justification because the bearing of hardships through which you expect relief and a handsome result is better than a violation the consequence of which you fear, and that you fear you will be called upon by Allah to account for it and you will not be able to seek forgiveness for it in this world or in the next.

You should avoid shedding blood without justification because nothing invites the Divine retribution or is greater in (evil) consequences and more effective in the decline of prosperity and cutting short of life more than the shedding of blood without a justification. On the Day of Judgement, Allah, the Glorified One, will commence giving His judgement among the people with regard to the cases of bloodshed

committed by them. Do not, therefore, strengthen your authority by shedding prohibited blood because this will weaken and lower authority. It moreover destroys it and shifts it elsewhere. You cannot offer any excuse before Allah or before me for any wilful killing because there must be the question of revenge in it. If you are involved in it be error and you exceed in the use of your whip or sword or are harsh in inflicting punishment, as sometimes even a blow by the fist or a smaller stroke causes death, then the pride in your authority should not prevent you from paying the blood money to the survivors of the killed person.

You should avoid self-admiration. Rely in what appears to be good on yourself. Do not have any affinity for any exaggerated praise; it is one of the most reliable opportunities for Satan to obliterate the good deeds of the virtuous.

Avoid demonstrating (the weight of) your obligation to your subjects for having done good to them or praising your own actions or making promises then breaking them. Demonstrating such an obligation destroys goodness. Self-praise takes away the light of truth. Breaking promises earns the hatred of Allah and of the people. Allāh, the Glorified One, says the following: “Most hateful to Allah is that you say what you do not do” (Holy Quran, 61: 3).

Avoid haste in matters before their time. Slowness till their proper time, insistence on them when the propriety of action is not known or weakens when it becomes clear is preferable. Assign to every matter its proper place and do every job at its appropriate time.

Do not appropriate to yourself that in which the people have an equal share, nor should you be indifferent of matters which have come to light with the excuse that you are accountable for others. Shortly, the curtains of all matters will be raised from your vision and you will be required to render redress to the oppressed. Have control over (your) sense of prestige. Beware of any outburst of anger, the might of your arm and the sharpness of your tongue. Guard yourself against all these by avoiding haste and by delaying severe measures till your anger subsides and till you gain your self-control. You cannot withhold yourself from this unless you bear in mind that you have to return to Allah.

It is necessary for you to recall how matters went with those who preceded you, be it those of a government, or a great tradition, or a precedent of our Prophet (ص), or the obligatory commands contained in

the Book of Allah. You should follow them as you have seen us acting upon them and should exert yourself in following what I have enjoined you to follow in this document wherein I have exhausted my pleas to you. If your heart advances towards its passions, you may have no plea in its support.

I ask Allah through the extent of His mercy and the greatness of His power of giving to grant me a good inclination, that He may prompt me and you own selves to present a clear plea before Him and before His creatures in a manner that may attract His pleasure along with handsome praise among the people, good effect in the country, an increase in prosperity and a heightening of honor, and that He may allow me and you own selves to die a death of virtue and martyrdom. Surely, we have to return to Him. Peace be on the Messenger of Allah (ص), and that is the end of the matter.

This document, which deserves to be called the constitution of the Islamic policy, was prepared by the person who was the greatest scholar of the Divine Law and who acted upon it more than anyone else. From studying Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's way of governance as recorded on these pages, it can be concluded that his aim was only to enforce the Divine Law and the improvement of social conditions , not to disrupt public security or to fill treasures by plunder, or to strive to extend the country's boundaries by fair or foul means. Worldly governments generally adopt such constitutions which cater to their utmost benefit and try to change every law which is against that aim or jeopardizes their objective. Every article of this constitution serves as a custodian of common interests and protects collective organization. Its enforcement has no impact over selfishness; there is no iota of self-interest in it. It contains such basic principles for the fulfillment of Allah's obligations, the protection of human rights without distinction of religion or community, care for the destitute, the poor, the provision of succor to the low and the down-trodden. From it, full guidance can be earned for the propagation of righteousness and justice, the establishment of peace and security, and the prosperity and well-being of the people.

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this instrument for Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar when the latter was appointed as the Governor of Egypt in 38 A.H./658 A.D. Malik al-Ashtar was one of the chief companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). He had shown great endurance, steadfastness, perfect confidence and trust in Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). He had attained the utmost nearness and attachment to him by molding his conduct and character after those of Imam Ali ibn Abu

Talib (ع). This can be gauged by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's words: "Malik was to me as I was to the Messenger of Allah (ص)" (Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 15, p. 98; Al-A`lam, Vol. 6, p. 131). Malik al-Ashtar, too, proved all of this through his selfless attitude towards his service, took a very active part in military encounters and proved himself to be Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's right arm in all battles and encounters. He showed such feats of courage and daring that his bravery was acknowledged throughout Arabia. Along with this bravery he was also conspicuous in endurance and forbearing. In this regard, Warram ibn Abu Firas an-Nakh`i has written that once Malik was passing through the market of Kufa wearing an outfit and turban made of gunny-cloth when a shopkeeper, finding him in this condition and wearing such clothes, threw some rotten leaves on him, but he did not at all mind this dirty behavior, nor did he even look at him. Rather, he quietly stepped forward. Then someone said to that shopkeeper, "Do you know to whom you have been so insolent?" He replied that he did not know who he was, whereupon he was told that it was Malik al-Ashtar, companion of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Hearing this, the shopkeeper almost lost his wits and at once ran behind Malik him to ask for his forgiveness for this insolence and humiliating treatment. In his search, he reached a mosque where Malik was offering prayers. When he finished the prayers, this man went forward and fell on Malik's feet and begged for his pardon with great pertinacity and weeping. Malik raised the man's chin up and said, "By Allah, I have come to the mosque to pray to Allah to forgive you. I myself had pardoned you that very moment and I hope Allah, too, will pardon you" (Tanbihul-Khawatir wa Nuzhatul-Nawazir, Vol. 1, p. 2; Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 42, p. 157). Such is the forgiveness and tolerance of a warrior at the mention of whose name courage itself trembled and whose swordsmanship was acknowledged by the brave men of Arabia. And such is the real sign of bravery: A man should exercise self-control during the bitterness of anger and moment of outrage and endure hardships with patience and calmness. In this regard, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's saying is that, "The most brave of men is one who over-powers his own passions."

However, besides these characteristics and qualities, he had a perfect aptitude for organization and administration. Thus, when the Othmani (al-Othmaniyyah) party began to spread the germs of destruction in Egypt and tried to upset the law and order of the country by mischief and rebellion, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) removed Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr from his post as the Governor of the country and decided to appoint Malik al-Ashtar in his place, although at that time Malik was also posted as the Governor of Nasibin. However, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent

him word that he should name someone as his deputy and come to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Upon receipt of this order, Malik al-Ashtar appointed Shabib ibn Amir al-Azdi in his place and he himself went to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) gave him his written appointment and sent him off to Egypt and also sent a separate written order to the Egyptians to obey him. When Mu`awiyah got the news of Malik al-Ashtar's appointment through his spies, he was upset because he had promised Amr ibn al-As that he would make him the governor of Egypt in reward for his services. He had hoped that Amr ibn al-As would easily defeat Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and wrest the power from him, but he now could not imagine conquering Egypt by defeating Malik al-Ashtar. He, therefore, decided to do away with him before he took over the charge. For this, he arranged with a landlord of the city of al-Arish (or al-Qulzumm) that when Malik passed through Al-Arish on his way to Egypt, he should kill him by some device or other and in reward for this the tax revenue of his estate would be written off. So, when Malik al-Ashtar reached al-Arish with retinue and force, the chief of al-Arish stood up in respect for him and insisted on having Malik as his own guest. Malik agreed and stayed at his place. When he finished the meal, the host gave him some syrup of honey to drink in which he had added some poison. Soon after drinking it, the poison began to show its effect and before the eyes of everyone, this great warrior known for his swordsmanship and for putting the rows of the enemy to fight calmly surrendered to death.

When Mu`awiyah received the news of the success of this plot, he was overjoyed and shouted in merriment, "O, honey is also an army of Allah!" Then, in a speech, he said, "Ali ibn Abu Talib had two right hand men. One was chopped off on the day of Siffin: that was Ammar ibn Yasir, and the second has been severed now: he is Malik al-Ashtar."

When the news of Malik's assassination reached Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he was very grieved and sorrowful. He said the following: "Malik! Who is Malik?! If Malik was a stone, he was hard and solid; if he was a rock, he was a great rock which had no parallel. It seems his death has made me also lifeless. I swear by Allah that his death made the Syrians joyous and insulted the Iraqis." Then he continued to say: "Women have become too barren to give birth to a man like Malik..." (al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 3392-3395; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, pp. 352-353; al-Ya`qubi, Vol. 2, p. 194; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1366; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 6, pp. 74-77; Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, pp. 313-314; Abul-Fida', Vol. 1, p. 179).

Letter 54

To Talhah and az-Zubayr (through Imran ibn al-Hussain al-Khuza'i[1]). Abū Ja`far al-Iskafi has mentioned this in his "Kitab al-Maqamat on the excellent qualities (manaqib) of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)."

You both know, though you conceal it, that I did not approach the people before they approached me, and I did not ask them to swear the oath of allegiance to me till they themselves swore the oath of allegiance to me. You both were among those who approached me and swore the oath of allegiance to me. Certainly the common people did not swear the oath of allegiance under any force or for any money given to them. If you two swore allegiance to me obediently, come back and offer repentance to Allah soon. But if you swore allegiance to me reluctantly, you have certainly given me cause for action by showing your obedience and

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[214]Imra n ibn al-Hussain al-Khuza'i was a high ranking companion [of Imam Ali (ع)] who was distinguished for his learning and achievements. He was very cautious in relating traditions. He accepted Islam in the year of the Battle of Khaybar and participated in *jihad* with the Prophet (ص). He was honored by the judicial status in Kufa and died in Basra in 52 A.H. One of the authentic traditions related by Imra n ibn al-Hussain about Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is this: The Messenger of Allah raised and sent an army under the command of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). From the *khums* (one-fifth) received by him, "Ali set aside a slave girl for himself. This was seen as distasteful by some of his men and four of them decided to complain of it to the Prophet (ص). On their return, they approached the Prophet (ص) and one of them stood up and said the following: O Messenger of Allah! Do you not see that Ali (ع) did such-and-such?' The Prophet (ص) turned his face away from him. Another man stood up and made the same complaint and the Prophet (ص) turned his face away from him, too. Still another man stood up and repeated what his two colleagues had said and met the same reaction. Then the fourth man stood up and spoke like his predecessors. The Prophet (ص) finally turned to them with signs of anger on his face and said the following: `What do you want me to do to Ali? (repeating it thrice). Surely Ali is from me and I am from him and after me he is the master of all the believers'" (*Jami'al-Sihah*, al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 5, p. 632; *Al-Musnad*, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 4, pp. 437-438; *Al-Musnad*, Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi, p. 111; *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim, Vol. 3, pp. 110-111; *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, Abu Nu'aym, Vol. 6, p. 294; *Tarikh al-Islam*, al-Dhahbi, Vol. 2, p. 196; *Tarikh*, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, p. 345; *Usd al-Ghaba*, Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 27, *Al-Isaba*, Ibn Hajar, Vol. 2, p. 509).

concealing your disobedience[215] By my life, you were not more entitled than other Muhajirun to conceal and hide the matter. Your refusal to swear the oath of allegiance before actually doing so would have been easier than getting out of it after having already accepted it.

You have indicated that I killed Othman; then let someone from among the people of Medina who supported neither me nor you decide the matter between me and yourself. One of us shall face(the command of law) according to (one's) involvement. You should give up your way now, when the great question before you is only one of shame, before you face the question of shame coupled with the fire of Hell, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 55

To Mu`awiyah

Allāh, the Glorified One, has made this world for what is to come, for the Hereafter, putting its inhabitants to trial as to which of you is good in deeds. We have not been created for this world, nor ordered to strive for it. We have been made to stay in it to stand the trial therein. So, Allah has tried me by you and tried you by me. He has, therefore, made each of us a plea for the other.

Now, you have leapt on the world by a wrong interpretation of the Holy Quran and wanted me to account for what neither my hand nor tongue was responsible, yet you and the Syrians put the blame on me and your scholar incited against me the ignorant and one who is sitting incited the one who is standing. You should fear Allah with regard to your soul and not allow Satan to lead you. Turn your face towards the next world because that is our path and yours. Fear lest Allah should entangle you in any sudden affliction which may destroy the root as well as cut away the branches. I swear to you by Allah an oath which will not be broken that if destiny brings me and you together, I shall steadfastly hold before you:

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[215]That is to say, "You are men of riches and means, having a large tribe and community. Why do you need this double dealing of concealing the real feelings of the heart, showing obedience and swearing allegiance loathsomely and unwillingly? Of course, if someone else who is weak and helpless said that he was obliged to swear the oath of allegiance, his point could be accepted to some extent. But when no one else has expressed his helplessness in the matter, why did this helplessness befall you so that you now regard your swearing of allegiance to be the result of your helplessness?!"

"Till Allah judges between us and He is the Best of the judges" (Holy Quran, 7: 87).

Instruction 56

When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Placed Shurayh Ibn Hani (al-Madhhaji) at the Head of the Vanguard Preceding Towards Syria, He Issued this Document of Instruction to Him.

Fear Allah every morning and evening and remain apprehensive about yourself with regard to this deceitful world, and do not regard it as safe in any case. Be informed that if, for fear of some evil, you do not refrain from things which you love, passions will then fling you into a lot of harm. Therefore, refrain for your own soul and be your own protector against your anger; suppress and kill it.

Letter 57

To the People of Kufa When He Marched from Medina to Basra

I have come out of my city either as an oppressor or as an oppressed person, either as a rebel or as the one against whom rebellion has been committed. In any case, whomsoever this letter of mine reaches, I appeal to him in the name of Allah that he should come to me, and if I am in the right, he should help me; but if I am wrong, then he should try to get me to the right according to his view.

Letter 58

Written to the People of Various Localities Describing What Took Place Between Him and the People of Siffin

It all began thus: We and the Syrians met in an encounter although we believe in one and the same God and follow the same Prophet (ص) and our message in Islam is the same. We did not want them to add anything to the belief in Allah or to acknowledging His Messenger (ص), nor did they want us to add any such things. In fact, there was a complete unity except that we differed on the question of shedding Othman's blood although we were not involved in it. We suggested to them to appease the situation by calming the temporary irritation and

pacifying the people till matters settled down and stabilized when we would gain strength to put matters right.

They, however, said that they would settle it by war. Thus, they refused our offer and consequently war spread its wings and came to stay. Its flames rose and gained momentum. Once the war had bitten us as well as them and pierced its talons into us as well as into them, they accepted what we had proposed to them. So, we agreed to what they suggested and hastened to meet their request. In this way, the plea became clear to them and no excuse was left to them. Now, whoever among them adheres to this will be saved by Allah from ruin, and whoever shows obstinacy and insistence (on wrong) is the opposite: one whose heart has been blinded by Allah and evils will surround his head.

Letter 59

To al-Aswad ibn Qutbah, Governor of Hulwan

If the actions of a governor follow the passions, his justice will be greatly hampered. All people should be equal in their rights before you because injustice cannot substitute justice. Avoid that thing the like of which you will not like for your own self. Exert yourself in what Allah has made obligatory on you, hoping for His reward and fearing His chastisement.

Be informed that this world is a place of trial. Whoever here wastes any hour of his time will repent it on the Day of Judgement and nothing can ever make you too satisfied as not to need righteousness. One of your obligations is that you should protect yourself (from sins) and look after the subjects your best. The benefit that will come to you from this will be greater than that which will accrue (to people) through you, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 60

To the Officers Through Whose Jurisdictions the Army Passes

From the servant of Allah, Ali ibn Abu Talib, to all the collectors of revenue and officers of the realm through whose area the army passes.

I have sent an army that will pass by you, if Allah so wills. I have instructed them about what Allah has made obligatory on them, namely

that they should avoid assault and shun harm. I hold myself clear before you and those (unbelievers) who are under your protection from any annoyance committed by the army except when one is compelled by hunger and there is no other way to satisfy it. If anyone of them takes anything by force, you should punish him. None of you should be foolish enough to obstruct them or intervene in matters which we have allowed them by way of exception. I myself am within the army. So, refer to me their high-handedness and any hardship which is caused by them and which you cannot avert except through Allah and through myself. I shall then avert it with the help of Allah, if He so wills.

Letter 61

To Kumayl ibn Ziyad an-Nakh`i, Governor of Hit, Expressing Displeasure with His Inability to Prevent the Enemy Forces That Passed Through His Area from Marauding

The negligence by a man of what he has been made responsible for, and the doing of what is to be done by others, is a manifest weakness and a ruinous sight. Certainly, your advance on the people of Qarqisiya and your abandonment of the forces over which we had appointed you, without anyone to protect them or to repulse the enemy force, are signs of a shattered mentality. In this way, you served like a bridge for the enemy who came marauding on your allies while your arms were weak. You had no force around you. You could not prevent the enemy from advancing. You could not break its might. You could not defend the people of your area and you could not carry out functions on behalf of your Imam.

Letter 62

To the People of Egypt Sent Through Malik al-Ashtar When He Was Made Governor

Allah, the Glorified One, deputed Muhammad (ص) as a warner for all the worlds and a witness for all the prophets. When the Prophet (ص) expired, the Muslims quarrelled about power after him. By Allah, it never occurred to me and I never imagined that after the Prophet (ص) the Arabs would snatch away the caliphate from his Ahlul-Bayt (ع), nor that

they would take it away from me after him, but I suddenly noticed how people surrounded the man to swear the oath of allegiance to him.[216]

I, therefore, withheld my hand till I saw that many people were reverting from Islam and trying to destroy the religion of Muhammad (ص). I then feared that if I did not protect Islam and its people, and if there occurred in it a breach or destruction, it would mean a greater blow to me than the loss of power over you which was, in any case, to last for a few days of which everything would pass away as the mirage passes away, or as the cloud scuds away. Therefore, in these eventualities, I rose till wrong was destroyed and disappeared and religion attained peace and safety.

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[216]The Prophet's declarations about Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) such as: "This is my brother, my vicegerent and my caliph among you," and while returning from his farewell hajj at Ghadir Khum, that "For whosoever I am the master, Ali is his master" had already settled the issue of the Prophet's replacement and succession. Besides them, there was no further need at all for any new "election", nor could it be imagined that the people of Medīna would feel the need for an "election" after Allah had already elected a man to succeed His Prophet (ص). But some power-hungry individuals ignored these clear injunctions as if their ears had never been acquainted with them and considered the election so necessary that, forgetting completely about performing the burial rites for the Prophet (ص), they assembled at the *saqifa* of Banu Sa`idah and "elected" Abu Bakr as caliph without the slightest show of a democratic process. This was a very critical moment for Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). On one hand, some interested individuals declared that he should take up arms and, on the other hand, he noticed that those Arabs who had accepted Islam by dint of its military might were leaving it and Musaylimah ibn Thumamah al-Hanafi, the Liar (al-Kaththab), and Tulayhah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadi (the Liar) were throwing tribe after tribe into misguidance. In these circumstances, had there been a civil war and Muslims had fought against Muslims, the forces of heresy and hypocrisy would have joined together and swept Islam off the surface of the earth. Therefore, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) preferred to keep quiet rather than to fight and, with the purpose of maintaining the solidarity of Islam, confined himself to peacefully protesting rather than taking up arms. This was because formal power was not so dear to him as the good and prosperity of the community. For stopping the machinations of the hypocrites and defeating the aims of the mischief mongers, there was no other course but that he should not fan the flames of war by giving up his own claim. This was such a big deed for the preservation of Islamic policy that it is acknowledged by all the sects of Islam.

An excerpt from the same letter:

By Allah, if I had encountered them alone and they had been so numerous as to fill earth to the brim, I will not have worried or become perplexed. I am clear in myself and possess conviction from Allah about their misguidance and my guidance. I am hopeful and expectant that I will meet Allah and get His good reward. But I am worried that foolish and wicked people will control the affairs of the entire community. The result: They will grab the funds of Allah as their own property and make His people slaves[217] fight with the virtuous and ally with the sinful. Indeed, there is among them whoever drank (wine) unlawfully[218] and was

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[217]2. This refers to the saying of the Holy Prophet (ص) about the children of Umayyah and the children of Abul-As ibn Umayyah (grandfather of Othman ibn Affan and ancestor of the dynasty of Marwan's caliphs), as related by Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, that the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following: "When the number of Banu Umayyah reaches forty men, they will make Allah's people their slaves, grab Allah's funds as their own property and render the Book of Allah a cause of corruption" (*Al-Mustadrak*, Vol. 4, p. 479; *Kanz al-Ummal*, Vol. 11, p. 149). About the children of Abul-As it is related by Abu Dharr, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Ibn Abbas, Abu Hurayra and others that the Holy Prophet (ص) said the following: "When the number of Banu Abul-As reaches thirty men, they will grab the funds of Allah as their own property, make Allah's people their slaves and render the religion of Allah a cause of corruption" (*Al-Musnad*, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 3, p. 80; *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim, Vol. 4, p. 480; *Al-Matalib al-Aliyah*, Ibn Hajar, Vol. 4, p. 332; *Majma'az-Zawa'id*, al-Haythami, Vol. 5, pp. 241, 243; *Kanz al-Ummal*, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Vol. 11, pp. 148, 149, 351, 354). The history of Islam (after the death of the Holy Prophet [ص]) contains sufficient testimony to prove this prediction of the Holy Prophet (ص). The fear of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) for the Muslim community was based on it.

[218]3. The man who drank wine was al-Walid ibn Uqbah ibn Abu Mu'ayt. He was born by the same mother as that of caliph Othman and of his Governor of Kufa. Al-Walid, on an occasion, in a state of intoxication, led the morning prayers in the central mosque of Kufa with four *raka'at* instead of the usual two as prescribed by the Holy Prophet (ص). The congregation, which consisted of several pious persons like ibn Mas`ūd, was outraged and felt further irritated when, finishing the four *raka'at*, al-Walid said the following: "What a pleasant morning?! I would like to extend the prayers. Furthermore, if you consent, repeated complaints had already been made to the caliph against al-Walid on account of his debauchery, but as often dismissed." People now reproached Othman for not listening to their grievances and favoring such a scoundrel. By chance, they succeeded in taking off the signet ring from the hand of the Governor as he lay unconscious from the effects of an act of his

whipped by way of punishment fixed by Islam and there is whoever did not accept Islam till he had secured financial gain through it.[219] If this had not been so, I would not have emphasized gathering you, reprimanding you, mobilizing you and urging you (for jihad), but if you refuse and show weakness, I will leave you.

Do you not see that the boundaries of your cities have diminished, your populated areas have been conquered, your possessions have been snatched away and your cities and lands have been assaulted? May Allah have mercy on you, get up to fight your enemy and do not remain confined to the ground; otherwise, you will face oppression and suffer ignominy and your fate will be the worst. The warrior should be wakeful because if he sleeps, the enemy does not sleep, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 63

To Abu Musa (`Abdullah ibn Qays) al-Ash`ari, Governor of Kufa when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) learned that he was dissuading the people of Kufa from joining the forces to fight the battle of Jamal when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had called them to fight along with him:

From the servant of Allah, Ali ibn Abu Talib, to `Abdullah ibn Qays: I have come to know of words uttered by you which go in your favor as well as against you[220]. So, when my messenger reaches you,

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debauchery. It was carried off to Medina. Still, the caliph was too slow and hesitated to enforce the punishment on his Governor (his half brother); giving cause to be himself reproachfully accused of ignoring the law, although at last he was persuaded to have al-Walid whipped forty lashes. He was consequently deposed from his office. Sa'id ibn al-As, a cousin of Othman was appointed to take his place, and this was a matter of a great reproach against Othman" (*Ansab al-Ashraf*, al-Baladhiri, Vol. 5, pp. 33-35; *Al-Aghani*, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, Vol. 4, pp. 174-187; *Al-Isti`ab*, Vol. 4, pp. 1554-1557; *Usd al-Ghaba*, Vol. 5, pp. 91-92; al-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 2843-2850; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, pp. 105-107; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 17, pp. 227-245).

[219]The man who accepted Islam only after securing financial gain was Mu`awiyah who did so only for worldly benefits.

[220]1. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had the idea of suppressing the rebellion of the people of Basra, he sent this letter through Imam al-Hassan (ع) to Abu Musa (Abdullah ibn Qays) al-Ash`ari, who had been appointed Governor of Kufa by Othman. In it, the Imam (ع) scolds him for his duplicity and self-

prepare yourself and get ready, come out of your den and call upon those who are with you. Then, if you are convinced of the truth, get up. But if you feel cowardly, go away. By Allah, you will be caught wherever you may be and you will not be spared till you are completely upset and everything about you is scattered and till you are shaken from your seat. Then, you will fear from your front as you do from the rear.

What you hope for is not a light matter; it is a serious calamity. We have to ride its camels, overcome its difficulties and level its mountains. Set your mind in order, take a grip on your affairs and acquire your (lot and your) share. If you do not like it, go away to where neither you are welcome nor can you escape. It is better that you be left alone and lie sleeping. Then no one will inquire where is so-and-so. By Allah, this is the case of right with the rightful person, and we do not care what the heretics do, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 64

Replying to Mu`awiyah.

Certainly, we and you were on amicable terms, as you mentioned, but differences arose between us and your own self the other day when we accepted belief (iman)while you rejected it. Today, the status is that we are steadfast (in our belief) but you are creating mischief. Those of you who accepted Islam did so reluctantly and that, too, took place when all the chief men had accepted Islam and joined the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and his descendants).

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contradictory behavior. He also attempted to persuade him to carry out *jihad* because on one hand, he used to say that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was the true Imam and allegiance to him was right while, on the other, he said that to support him in fighting against the Muslims was not right, that it was a mischief and it was necessary to keep off this mischief. Thus, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has referred to this contradictory view with the words “huwa laka wa’alayka” (which go in your favor as well as against you). The intention is that when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is the rightful Imam, how can fighting his enemy in his own company be wrong? And if fighting on his side is wrong, then what is the meaning of saying that he is the rightful Imam? In any case, in spite of his reluctance to fight, the people of Kufa came out in large numbers to join Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s army and fully participated in the battle, giving such a defeat to the people of Basra that the latter never again dared to rebellion thereafter.

You have stated that I killed Talhah and az-Zubayr, forced Aisha out of her house and adopted residence between the two cities (Kufa and Basra). These matters are none of your concern, nor do they involve anything against you. Therefore, no explanation about them is due to you.

You also state that you are coming to me with a party of Muhajirun and Ansar, but hijra came to an end on the day your brother was taken prisoner. If you are in a hurry, then wait a bit as I may come to meet you and that will be more befitting as it will mean that Allah has appointed me to punish you. But if you come to me, it will be just as the poet of Banu Asad said: "They are advancing against summer winds which are hurling stones on them in the highlands and in the lowlands."

(Remember that) I still have the sword with which I dispatched your grandfather, mother's brother and brother to one and the same place (Hell). By Allah, I know what you are! Your heart is sheathed and your intelligence is weak. It is better to say that you have ascended to where you view a bad scene which is against you, not in your favor, because you are searching a thing lost by someone else, you are tending someone else's cattle and you are hankering after a thing which is not yours nor have you any attachment to it. How remote your words are from your actions, and how closely you resemble your paternal and maternal uncles who were led by their wickedness and love for wrong to oppose Muhammad (ص), consequently, they were killed as you know. They could not put up a defense against the calamity and could not protect their "safe haven" from the striking of swords which abound in the battle and which do not show weakness.

You have said a lot about the killing of Othman. You must first join what the people have joined (i.e. allegiance) then seek a verdict about (the accused people) from me and I shall settle the matter between you and them according to the Book of Allah, the Sublime. But what you are aiming at is just the fake nipple given to a child in the first days of weaning. Peace be on those who deserve it.

Mu`awiyah had written a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in which he, having recalled mutual unity and amicability, laid on him the blame of killing Talhah and az-Zubayr and getting Aisha out of her house with the objective to adopt Kufa as his seat of government in place of Medina. In the end, he made a threat of war, saying that he was about to come out with a force of Muhajirun and Ansar to fight. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this letter in reply to him wherein he commented about

Mu`awiyah's claim for unity. He meant to say the following: "There might have been unity between you and us, but with the advent of Islam, such a huge gap has developed between both of us that it is not possible to bridge it and such a separation has occurred which cannot be rejoined. The reason for all of this is that we responded to the call of the Prophet (ص) and hastened towards Islam while you were still an unbeliever and living in ignorance, hence, we and you came to adopt separate ways. But when Islam secured stability and the chief of Arabs entered its fold, you, too, felt obliged to do so [with the threat of otherwise losing your life]. You secured protection of your lives by pretending to accept Islam, but you continued secretly to fan the mischief intended to shatter Islam's foundations. Since we had accepted Islam of our own free will and pleasure, we adhered to the right path. At no stage did any faltering occur in our steadfastness. Therefore, your acceptance of Islam could not make us agree with your views."

As regarding Mu`awiyah's accusation that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) engineered the killing of Talhah and az-Zubayr, even if this blame is admitted as true, is it not a fact that they had both openly revolted against Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and had risen for war after breaking their oath of allegiance to him? Therefore, if they were killed with regard to their rebellion, their blood would be wasted, and no blame would lie on the killer because the penalty for whoever rebellions against the rightful Imam is death and fighting against him is permissible, without any doubt. The fact, however, is that this accusation is baseless because Talhah was killed by a man from his own party. Thus, the historians write: Marwan ibn al-Hakam shot Talhah with an arrow and, turning to Aban ibn Othman, said the following: "We have killed a killer of your father and relieved you of revenge" (Ibn Sa`d, Vol. 3, part 1, p. 159; Ibn Al-Athir Vol. 3, p. 244; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 2, pp. 766-769; Usd al-Ghaba, Vol. 3, pp. 60, 61; Al-Isaba, Vol. 2, p. 230; Tahthib al-Tahthib, Vol. 5, p. 21).

As for az-Zubayr, he was killed by Amr ibn Jurmuz as he was on his way back from Basra and there was no hand of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in it. Similarly, Aisha herself came out of her house as the head of this rebellious group while Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) advised her several times to realize her status and not to step out of her bounds, but these suggestions had no effect on her.

Of the same note was his criticism that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) left Medina and adopted Kufa as the seat of his government because Medina turned out bad people and threw away dirt. The reply to this is only that Mu`awiyah himself always retained Damascus as his capital, always staying away from Medina.

In this way, what right can he have to object to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) changing his seat of government? Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) left Medina because of those rebellions which had cropped up from all directions. In order to suppress them, only the selection of such a place as a capital, from where military assistance could be mobilized at any time, could be useful. Thus, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had seen on the occasion of the Battle of Jamal that a great majority of the people of Kufa had supported him. By making it a base for the army, the defense of the Imam (ع) against the enemy could be easily managed, while Medina was not appropriate for military mobilization, supplies or reinforcements.

Finally, as for Mu`awiyah's threat that he will march with the Muhajirun and the Ansar, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied to this point in a very subtle way: "How will you bring the Muhajirun now since the door for hijra was closed when your brother, Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan, was taken prisoner?" This man was taken prisoner on the day of the fall of Mecca. There is no question of hijra after the fall of Mecca so as to enable anyone to be called a muhajir because of the Prophet's saying: "There is no hijra after the victory over Mecca."

Letter 65

To Mu`awiyah

Now is the time[221] that you should benefit by observing a clear view of the main matters because you have been treading in the path of

[221]At the end of the battle of the Kharijites, Mu`awiyah wrote a letter to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wherein he, as usual, indulged in mud-slinging. In reply, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) wrote this letter in which he has tried to draw Mu`awiyah's attention to the clear facts about this very battle of the Kharijites because this battle took place in accordance with the prediction of the Prophet (ص) while Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) himself had said before the battle that besides the people of Jamal and Siffin, he had to fight against one more group and they were the "deviators" from the religion, namely the Kharijites. The

your forefathers of making wrong claims, spreading false and untrue notions, claiming for yourself what is far above you and demanding what is not meant for you: You want to run away from what is right and to rebellion against what is more fastened to your flesh and blood, namely what has been heard by the depth of your ears and has filled your chest. After forsaking right, nothing remains except clear misguidance, and after disregarding a (clear) statement, there is nothing left but confusion. You should, therefore, guard (yourself) against doubts and the ill-effects of confusion because for a long time, mischief has spread its veils and its gloom has blinded your eyes.

I have received your letter which is full of uncouth utterances: They weaken the cause of peace. It also is full of nonsensical expressions which have not been prepared with knowledge and forbearance. By reason of these things, you have become like one who is sinking in a marshy land or groping in a dark place. You have raised yourself to a status which is difficult to approach and is devoid of any signs (of guidance). Even the royal kite cannot reach it. It is parallel to the Ayyuq (the star Capella), in loftiness.

May Allah forbid that you should be in charge of people's affairs after my assuming authority as caliph, or that I should issue an edict or document granting you authority over any of them. Therefore, from now on, you should guard yourself and be watchful because if you recalcitrate till the people of Allah (are forced to) rush upon you, then matters will be

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occurrence of this battle and the killing of the man with breasts (Dhul-Thudayya) was a clear proof of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) being on the right track. If Mu`awiyah had not been obsessed with self-praise and lust for conquests, and had he not shut his eyes against what is right, as was the case with his forefather, Abun Sufyan, and his brother, Utbah, he would have seen right and joined its tracks. But compelled by his natural inclinations, he always evaded what is right and shunned the truth, keeping himself blind to those sayings of the Prophet (ص) which threw light on Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's Imamate and vicegerency. Because of being with the Prophet (ص) in the farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet's saying: "Of whomsoever I am the master, Ali is his master" was not hidden from him. Neither was the Prophet's saying that: "O Ali! You are to me as Harun was to Musa" because of his presence during the battle of Tabuk. In spite of all this, Mu`awiyah spent all his life concealing right and encouraging wrong. This was not due to any misunderstanding; rather, it was his own lust for power. This is what kept him busy prompting himself through means of suppression, trampling on the truth and violating justice, and thus do some people behave.

closed for you and whatever can be accepted from you today will not be accepted then, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 66

To Abdullah ibn Abbas

(A different version of this letter has already been included)

Sometimes a person feels joyful about a thing which he was not to miss in any case and feels grieved for a thing which was not to come to him at all. You, therefore, should not regard the attainment of pleasure and the satisfaction of the desire for revenge as the best favor in this world; rather, the putting off of the (flame of) wrong and the revival of right should be so. Your pleasure should be for what (good deeds) you have sent forward; our grief for having lost you should be for what you are leaving behind, and your worry should be about what is to befall after death.

Letter 67

To Qutham ibn al-Abbas, his Governor over Mecca

Make arrangements for people's hajj. Remind them of the days (of devotion to) Allah. Give them audience in the morning and in the evening. Explain the law to the seeker, teach the ignorant and hold discussions with the learned. There should be no intermediary between you and the people except your tongue and no guard save your own face. Do not prevent any needy person from meeting you because if the needy is returned unsatisfied from your door in the first instance, even doing it thereafter will not bring you praise.

See what has been levied with you of the funds of Allah (in the public treasury) and spend it over the persons who have families, the distressed, the starving, the naked, at your end. Then send the remainder to us for distribution to those at this end.

Ask the people of Mecca not to charge rent from lodgers because Allāh, the Glorified One, says the following: "... alike for the dweller therein as well as the stranger" (Holy Quran, 22: 25). "Al-Aakif" (the mosque dweller) here means whoever is living there, while "al-badi" (the stranger) means whoever is not among the people of Mecca, one who

comes for hajj from outside. May Allah grant us and yourself promptitude for seeking His love (by doing good deeds), and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 68

To Salman al-Farisi Prior to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's Caliphate:

The example of the world is like that of a snake which is soft in touch but whose poison is fatal. Therefore, keep yourself aloof from whatever appears to be good to you because of its short stay with you. Do not worry about it because of your conviction that it will leave you and that its circumstances are vicissitudes. When you feel most attracted to it, shun it the most because whenever someone is assured of happiness in it, it throws him into danger, or when he feels secure in it, the world alters his security into fear, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 69

To al-Harith (ibn Abdillah, al-A`war) al-Hamdani:

Adhere to the rope of the Holy Quran and seek instructions from it. Regard its lawful as lawful and its unlawful as unlawful. Testify to the right that has been in the past. Take lessons for the present condition of this world from the past (conditions) because its one phase resembles the other, its end is to meet its beginning, and everything in it is to change and disappear. Regard the Name of Allah as too great to mention Him save in the matter of righteousness. Remember death more often and (what is to come) after death. Do not long for death except when depending on a reliable condition.

Avoid every action the doer of which likes for himself but dislikes for the Muslims in general. Avoid every action which is performed in secrecy and from which shame is felt openly. Also avoid the action the doer of which is questioned and he himself regards it as bad or offers excuses for it. Do not expose your honor to be treated as the subject of people's talks. Do not relate to the people all that you hear, for that will amount to falsehood. Do not contest all that the people relate to you for that will mean ignorance. Kill your anger and forgive when you have power (to punish). Show forbearance in the moment of rage and pardon in spite of authority; the eventual end will then be in your favor. Seek good

out of every favor that Allah has bestowed on you, and do not waste any favor of Allah over you. The effect of Allah's favors over you should be visible on you.

Be informed that the most distinguished among the believers is one who is the most forward in spending from his own funds on himself, his family and property because whatever good you send forward will remain in store for you and the benefit of whatever you keep behind will be derived by others. Avoid the company of the person whose opinion is unsound and whose action is detestable because a man is judged after the company which he keeps.

Live in big cities because they are collective centers of the Muslims. Avoid places of neglectfulness and wickedness and places where there are paucity of supporters for the obedience of Allah. Confine your thinking to matters which are helpful to you. Do not sit in the marketing centers because they are the meeting places of Satan and the targets of mischief mongers. Frequently look at those over whom you enjoy superiority because this is a way of giving thanks.

Do not undertake a journey on Friday till you have attended the prayers except when you are going in the way of Allah, or in an excusable matter. Obey Allah in all your affairs because Allah's obedience has precedence over all other things. Lure your heart into worshipping, persuade it and do not force it. Engage it (in worshipping) when it is free and merry, except as regarding the obligations enjoined upon you, for they should not be neglected and must be performed at the five appointed times. Be on guard lest death should come down upon you while you have fled away from your Lord in search of worldly pleasures. Avoid the company of the wicked because vice adjoins vice. Regard Allah as great and love His lovers. Keep off anger because it is one large army from Satan's armies, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 70

To Sahl Ibn Hunayf al-Ansari, His Governor over Medina, about Certain Persons in Medina Who Had Joined Mu`awiyah

I have come to know that certain persons from your side are stealthily going over to Mu`awiyah. Do not feel sorry for their numbers so lost to you or for their help of which you are deprived. It is enough that they have gone into misguidance and you have been relieved of them.

They are running away from guidance and truth and advancing towards blindness and ignorance. They are seekers of this world and are proceeding to it, leaping towards it. They have known justice, seen it, heard it and appreciated it. They have realized that here, to us, all men are equal in the matter of what is right. Therefore, they ran away to selfishness and partiality. Let them remain remote and far away.

By Allah, surely they have not gone away from oppression nor joined justice. In this matter, we only desire Allah to resolve for us its hardships and to level for us its unevenness, if Allah wills, and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 71

To Mundhir ibn Jarud al-Abdi Who, in His Administrative Charge, Had Misappropriated Certain Things:

The good behavior of your father deceived me about you, and I thought that you would follow his way and tread on his path. But according to what has reached me about you, you are not giving up following your own inclinations and are not retaining any provision for the next world. You are making this world by ruining your next life and doing good to your kinsmen by cutting yourself off from religion.

If what has reached me about you is correct, then the camel of your family and the strap of your shoe are better than your own self. A man with qualities like yours is not fit to close a hole in the ground, nor for performing any deed, nor for increasing his status, nor for taking him as a partner in any trust, nor for trusting him against misappropriation. Therefore, proceed to me as soon as this letter reaches you if Allah so wills.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "Mundhir ibn Jarud al-Abdi is the one about whom Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: 'He looks very often at his own shoulders, feeling proud of his garments (appearance) and usually blowing away (dust) from his shoes.'"

Letter 72

To Abdullah ibn Abbas:

You cannot go farther than the limit of your life, nor can you be given a livelihood which is not for you. Remember that this life consists of two days: a day for you and a day against you, and that the world is a house (changing) authorities. Whatever in it is for you and would come to you despite your weakness, and if anything in it turns against you, it cannot be brought back despite your strength.

Letter 73

To Mu`awiyah:

In exchanging replies and listening to your letters [as someone reads them for me], my view has been weak and my intelligence has been erring. When you refer your demands to me and expect me to send you written replies, you are like one who is in deep slumber while his dreams contradict him, or one who stands perplexed and overwhelmed, not knowing whether what comes to him is for him or against him. You are not such a man but he is (to some extent) like you (as you are worse than him). I swear by Allah that, had it not been for (my) giving you time, you would have faced from me a catastrophe that would have crushed the bones and removed the flesh. Be informed that Satan has prevented you from turning to good actions and from listening to the words of counsels. Peace be upon those who deserve it.

Document 74

Written by Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) as a Protocol Between the Tribes of Rabi`ah and the People of Yemen, Taken from the Writing of Hisham Ibn (Muhammad) al-Kalbi:

This indenture contains what the people of Yemen, including the townsmen and the nomads, in addition to the tribes of Rabī`ah, including the townsmen and the nomads, have agreed on this: that they will adhere to the Book of Allah, will call to it and enjoin according to it and will respond to whoever calls to it and enjoins according to it. They will not sell it for any price nor accept any alternative for it. They will join hands against anyone who opposes it and abandons it. They will help one another. Their voice will be one. They will not break their pledge on account of the rebuke of one who rebukes, or of the wrath of an angry person, or the humiliating treatment of one group to the other, or the use of abusive terms by one party against the other.

Letter 75

To Mu`awiyah, Soon after Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Was Sworn In. (Muhammad Ibn Umar) al-Waqidi Has Mentioned this Letter in His Book Kitab al-Jamal:

From the servant of Allah, Ali, Ibn Abu Talib, to Mu`awiyah son of Abu Sufyan: You are aware of my excuses before you, people, and my shunning you till that happened which was inevitable and which could not be prevented. The story is long and much is to be said. What was to pass has passed and what was to come has come. Therefore, secure (my) allegiance from those who are with you and come in a deputation of your people to me, and that is the end of the matter.

Instruction 76

Given to Abdullah ibn Abbas at the time of his appointment at his Governor of Basra:

Meet people with a broad smile, allow them free audience and pass generous orders. Avoid anger because it is the augury of Satan. Remember that whatever takes you near Allah takes you away from the Fire (of Hell) and whatever takes you away from Allah takes you near the Fire.

Instruction 77

To Abdullah ibn Abbas at the Time of His Deputation to Confront the Kharijites:

Do not argue with them through the medium of the Holy Quran because the Holy Quran has many faces. You will say your own and they will say theirs; but argue with them by the Sunnah because they cannot find any escape from it.

Letter 78

To Abu Musa al-Ash`ari in Reply to the Latter's Letter Regarding the Two Arbitrators. Sa'id ibn Yahya al-Umawi Has Mentioned this in His Akitab Al-Maghazi:

Certainly, many people have turned away from many a (lasting) benefit (of the next life), for they bent towards the world and spoke with passion. I have been struck with wonder in this matter upon which people who are conceited have agreed. I am providing a cure for their wound but I fear lest it should develop into a clot of blood (and becomes incurable). Remember that nobody is more desirous than I for the unity of the umma of Muhammad (ص) and their solidarity. I seek through it good reward and an honorable place to return to.

I shall fulfil what I have pledged upon myself even though you may go back from the sound status that existed when you last left me because wretched is one who is denied the benefit of wisdom and experience. I feel enraged if anyone utters falsehood, or if I should worsen a matter which Allah has kept sound. Therefore, leave out what you do not understand because wicked people will be conveying to you vicious things; and that is the end of the matter.

Letter 79

To the Army Officers When Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Became Caliph:

What ruined those (nations) before you was that they denied people their rights, then they had to purchase them (with bribes), and they led the people to wrongdoing, and the latter followed their lead.

Selections

From the Sayings and Sermons of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (ع) Including His Replies to Questions and Maxims Made for Various Purposes

1. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: During civil disturbance be like an adolescent camel who has neither a back strong enough for riding nor udders for milking.

"Labun" [which exists in the original Arabic text] means a "milch camel" and "ibnul-labun" means its two-year old young. In this age, the young is neither suitable for riding nor does it has udders which could be milked. It is called "ibnul-labun" because in this period of two years its mother bears another young and begins yielding milk again.

The intention is that during a civil disturbance or trouble, a man should behave in such a manner that he may be regarded of no consequence and is thus ignored. No need should be felt for his participation in either contending party. This is so because during mischief making, only dissociation can save one from being assaulted. Of course, when the clash is between right and wrong, it is not permissible to keep aloof, nor can it be called civil disturbance. But on such occasions, it is obligatory to rise up to support what is right and suppress what is wrong. For example, during the battles of Jamal and Siffīn, it was obligatory to support the right and to fight against the wrong.

2. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Whoever adopts greed as a habit devalues himself; whoever discloses his hardship agrees to be humiliated, and whoever allows his tongue to overpower his soul debases the soul.

3. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Miserliness is a shame; cowardice is a defect; poverty disables an intelligent man from arguing his case, and a destitute person is a stranger in his own home town.

4. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Incapability is a catastrophe; endurance is bravery; abstinence is a wealth; self-restraint

is a shield (against sinning), and the best company is submission (to Allah's will).

5. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Knowledge is a venerable estate; good manners are new outfits, and thinking is a clear mirror.

6. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The bosom of the wise is the safe of his secrets; cheerfulness is the bond of friendship; effective forbearance is the grave of shortcomings.

It is narrated that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following in order to explain this meaning: Mutual reconciliation is the covering for shortcomings, and whoever admires himself attracts many opponents against him.[222]

7. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Charity is an effective cure, and the actions of people in their present life will be before their eyes in the next.

This saying incorporates two phrases:

The first sentence relates to charity, and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) describes it as an effective cure. This is so because when a man helps the poor and the destitute with alms, they pray for his health and recovery from the depth of their hearts and, therefore, their prayer is granted and it brings him a cure. In this regard, there is the saying of the Holy Prophet (ص) that, "Cure your sick with charity."

The second sentence relates to the disclosure of actions on the Day of Judgement, namely that the good and the bad deeds which a person performs in this world cannot be perceived by human senses because of the veil of material elements, but on the Day of Judgement, when material curtains will be lifted, they will so appear before the eyes

[222]In the last phrase, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) describes the consequences and effects resulting from self-admiration, namely that it creates hatred by and humiliation of others. Thus, the man who demonstrates his "greatness" by every pretext in order to make himself conspicuous is never regarded with esteem. People despise him because of his mental condition in seeking self-elevation. They are not prepared to accord him the worth which he claims to have. They regard him much less than what he regards him.

that there will be no possibility of denial by anyone. Thus, Allah has said the following: "On that Day, people shall come out (of their graves) in (scattered) groups to be shown their own deeds. Then whoever has done an atom-weight of good shall see it. And whoever has done an atom-weight of evil shall see it" (Holy Quran, 99: 6-8).

8. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: How wonderful is man: He speaks with fat, talks with a piece of flesh, hears with a bone and breathes through a hole!

9. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: When this world advances towards anyone (with its riches), it attributes to him the good of others, and when it turns away from him, it deprives him of his own good.[223]

They are friends of him whom the world favors
And they are foes of him whom the world hits.

10. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Deal with people in such a manner that if you die, they should weep for you, and if you live they should long for you.[224]

11. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: When you gain power over your adversary, pardon him as your way of expressing thanks [to Allāh] for being able to overpower him.[225]

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[223]The meaning is that when a man's fortune is helpful and the world is favorable to him, people will describe his performances with exaggeration and give credit to him for the actions of others. But if a man loses the favor of the world and the clouds of ill-luck and misfortune engulf him, people ignore his virtues and do not at all tolerate even to recall his name.

[224]To the person who behaves with others with benignity and mannerliness, people extend their hand of cooperation. They honor and respect him and shed tears when he dies. Therefore, a person should lead such an agreeable life that no one should have any complaint against him, nor should any harm be caused by him to anyone so that during his life-time, he should attract others, and after his death, too, he should be well remembered.

[225]The occasion for pardoning and forgiving is when there is power to take revenge. But when there is no such power, pardon is just the result of helplessness for which there is no credit. However, to practice pardon despite having power and ability to avenge is the essence of human distinction and an expression of thanks to Allah for bestowing such power. The feeling of

12. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The most helpless of all men is whoever cannot find a few brothers during his life, but still more helpless is whoever finds such a brother but loses him.[226]

13. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: When you get (only) small favors, do not push them away by being ungrateful.

14. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Whoever is abandoned by near ones is dear to remote ones.

15. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Every mischief monger cannot even be reproved.[227]

16. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: All matters are subject to destiny, so much so that sometimes death results from effort.

17. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked to explain the saying of the Messenger of Allah that: "Banish your old age (by hair-dye) and do not acquire resemblance to the Jews." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied: The Prophet (ص) said this at a time when the religion was

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gratefulness necessitates. It is then that man should bow down to Allah in humbleness and humility by which the delicate feeling of pity and kindness will rise in his heart. The rising flames of rage and anger will cool down after. Thereafter, there will be no urge to take revenge under the effect of which he will use his power and ability to satisfy his anger instead of using it properly.

[226]It is not difficult to attract others with good manners and cheerfulness and to befriend them by sweet speech because. No physical exertion or mental worry is required for this. Having made friends, it is still easier to maintain the friendship and good relationships because for making real friends, some effort is needed, while for maintaining friendship, no difficulty is unsurmountable. Therefore, no one can be more wretched than one who cannot even retain a thing which could be retained just by keeping away from frowning. The idea here is that a man should meet everyone with good manners and cheerfulness so that people may like to associate with him and extend a hand of friendship towards him.

[227]Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered this sentence when Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, Muhammad ibn Maslamah and Abdullah ibn `Umar refused to support him against the people of Jamal. He means to say that these people are so much against him that neither his words nor any evidence suffice to reproof, rebuke or correct them.

confined to a few, but now that its expanse has widened and it is firmly settled, everyone is free in his action.[228]

18. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following about those who avoided fighting on his side: They abandoned righteousness but did not support wrong.[229]

19. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Whoever gallops with a loose rein collides with death.

20. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Forgive the shortcomings of considerate people because when they fall into error, Allah raises them up.

21. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The consequence of fear is disappointment and of bashfulness is frustration. Opportunity passes away like the cloud. Therefore, make use of good opportunities.[230]

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[228]The idea here is that since in the dawn of Islam the number of Muslims was limited, it was necessary to keep them distinct from the Jews in order to maintain their collective entity. The Prophet (ص), therefore, ordered the use of hair-dye which was not in use among the Jews. Besides, it was also the aim that when facing the enemy the people should not look old and weak.

[229]This saying is about those who claimed to be neutral such as Abdullah ibn Umar, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, Abu Musa al-Ash`ari, al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, Usamah ibn Zayd and Anas ibn Malik. Undoubtedly, these people did not openly support wrong but did not support right, either. Such a conduct is also a kind of support for wrong. Therefore, they will be counted among the opponents of what is right.

[230]However bad a thing may be regarded among the people, and however it may be looked down upon, if it is not really bad, then to feel bashful about it is quite foolish because it will often cause deprivation from things which are the source of successes and achievements in this as well as in the next world. For example, if a man fears lest people should regard him as ignorant; therefore, he feels bashful in asking about an important and a necessary issue, then this misplaced bashfulness will result in his being deprived of knowledge. Hence, no sane person should feel bashful about making enquiries. Thus, an old man who was learning despite his old age was asked once whether he did not feel ashamed of learning in his old age. He replied in the following: "I do not feel any shame for being ignorant in my old age. How can I feel shame for learning in old age? Of course, to feel shame in doing things which are really

22. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: We have a right. If it is granted to us, that is good; otherwise, we will ride on the hind of the camel even though the night journey may be long.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "This is a very fine and eloquent expression. It means that if we are not allowed to enjoy our right, we will be regarded as humble. This sense comes out from this expression because on the rear part of the camel only slaves, prisoners or other people of this type used to ride."[231]

23. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: If the deeds of someone accord (him) a back status, he cannot be given a front status simply on account of his lineage.

24. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: To render relief to the grief-stricken and to provide comfort in hardship means the atonement of great sins.

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bad and mischievous is the essence of humanity and nobility. For instance, there are immoral deeds which are bad according to religion, intelligence and ethics. In any case, the first kind of bashfulness is bad and the second is good." In this regard, the Holy Prophet's saying is this: "Bashfulness is of two kinds: bashfulness of intelligence and bashfulness of foolishness. The bashfulness of intelligence is knowledge, whereas the bashfulness of foolishness is ignorance."

[231]The interpretation written by Sayyid ar-Radi is that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) intends to say that if our right, that lies with others in our status, as with the Imām whom it is obligatory to obey, is acknowledged and we are given the chance of worldly rule, it is well and good; otherwise, we will have to bear all sorts of hardships and ignominies, and we shall be compelled to live the life of ignominy and humiliation for some time to come. Some commentators have adopted a different meaning than this, namely that: "If our status is belittled and put aside while others are given precedence over us, we shall bear it patiently and agree to remain behind, and this is what is meant by riding on the hind part of the camel because the person who rides on the hind part is on the rear while the person who sits on its back is in the fore. Some people take it to mean that if we are allowed our right we will accept it, but if it is not given, we shall not behave like the rider who gives over the rein of his animal to someone else who is free to take him wherever he likes, but we shall stick to our right even though a long time may elapse rather than surrender to the usurpers.

25. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: O son of Adam! When you see that your Lord, the Glorified One, bestows His favors on you while you are disobeying Him, you should fear Him.[232]

26. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart, it manifests itself through unintentional words from his tongue and (in) the expressions of his face.[233]

27. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Keep walking in your sickness as long as you can.[234]

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[232]When a person goes on receiving favors despite his accumulated sins, he develops a misconception that Allah is pleased with him, and that this is the result of His pleasure because the increase in favors arises out of gratefulness. In the event of ungratefulness, the bestowal of favors stops. In this sense, Allah says the following: "Your Lord declared: 'If you are grateful, I will increase (My favors) on you, and if you are ungrateful, verily, My torment is indeed severe" (Holy Quran, 14: 7). Nevertheless, the continuous bestowal of favors, despite disobedience and ungratefulness, cannot be the result of Allah's pleasure, nor can it be said that in this way Allah has put him under the misconception that he should regard this exuberance of favors as the result of Allah's pleasure because when he knows that he is a sinner and disobedient, fully recognizing his sins and vices, then there are no grounds for misconception on his part by assuming Allah's pleasure and consent. He should rather think that this is a sort of trial and a respite. When his sinfulness and high-handedness reaches its zenith, he will be caught at once. Therefore, in such a case, he should keep waiting as to when Allah's favors are taken away from him and he is punished with deprivation.

[233]The things which a man wants to conceal from others do, indeed, come out on his tongue one time or another, and his effort at concealment is unsuccessful. This is so because although the far-sighted mind desires to keep them concealed, yet sometimes it gets entangled in some more important matter and becomes careless on this score when the concealed thing comes out in articulated words. When the mind becomes attentive, it is not possible to undo the matter just as an arrow cannot be recalled after being shot. Even if this is not the case and the mind is fully cautious and attentive, the thing cannot remain concealed because the lines of the face are indicative of mental feelings and reflect the heart's emotions; consequently, redness of the face can easily point out to the sense of shame.

[234]The idea here is that as long as sickness does not become serious do not give it importance because by giving importance the feelings get affected and the illness increases. Therefore, continue your activity and regard oneself as

28. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The best part of moderation is to conceal it.

29. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: When you are running away from the world and death is approaching, there is no question of delay in the encounter.

30. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Fear! Fear! By Allah, He has hidden your sins, so much so that it is as though He has forgiven them!

Faith, Unbelief, Doubt and Their Pillars

31. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), was asked once about faith. He said the following: "Faith stands on four pillars: endurance, conviction, justice and jihad.

Endurance, again, has four aspects: eagerness, fear, abstention (from the allurements of the world) and anticipation (of death). So, whoever is eager for Paradise will ignore his passions; whoever fears the Fire (of Hell) will refrain from committing prohibited deeds; whoever abstains from the world takes hardships lightly, and whoever anticipates death will hasten towards good deeds.

Conviction, also, has four aspects: prudent perception, intelligence and understanding, drawing lessons from instructive things and following the precedents of past people. So, whoever perceives with prudence, wise knowledge will be manifest to him, and to whomsoever wise knowledge becomes manifest he appreciates instructive objectives, and whoever appreciates instructive objectives is just like past people.

Justice also has four aspects: keen understanding, deep knowledge, a good power of decision and firm forbearance. Therefore, whoever understands comes to acquire the depth of knowledge; whoever acquires the depth of knowledge drinks from the spring of judgement, and whoever exercises forbearance never commits evil actions in his affairs and leads a praiseworthy life among the people.

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being well. This will dispel your sickness and also prevent the power of resistance from getting weak. It keeps up its psychological power, while the psychological power curbs small ailments by itself, provided it is not forced to give up resistance by surrendering the imagination to the ailment.

Jihad, also, has four aspects: enjoining others to do good, keeping away others from doing evil, fighting (in the way of Allah) sincerely and firmly on all occasions and detesting anyone who is vicious. So, whoever asks others to do good provides strength to the believers; whoever dissuades others from committing evil humiliates the unbelievers; whoever fights sincerely on all occasions carries out all his obligations, and whoever detests the vicious and becomes angry for the sake of Allah, then Allah will be angry in favor of him and will keep him pleased on the Day of Judgement.

Unbelief stands on four pillars: hankering after whims, quarreling with others, deviating from the truth and dissenting. So, whoever hankers after whims does not incline towards right; whoever quarrels much on account of ignorance remains permanently blinded from what is right; whoever deviates from the truth, for him good becomes evil and evil becomes good and he remains intoxicated with misguidance, and whoever makes a breach (with Allah and His Messenger), his path becomes difficult, his affairs become complicated and his way of escape becomes narrow.

Doubt has also four aspects: irrationality, fear, wavering and undue submission to everything. So, whoever adopts irrationality as his way of life, for him there is no dawn after the night; whoever is afraid of what befalls him has to run on his heels; whoever wavers in doubt, the satans trample upon him with their feet, and whoever submits to the destruction of this and the next world succumbs to it.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “We have left out the remaining portion of this saying for fear of length and for being outside the purpose of this chapter.”

32. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The doer of good is better than the good itself, and the doer of evil is worse than the evil itself.

33. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Be generous but not extravagant; be thrifty but not stingy.

34. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The best of riches is the abandonment of desires.

35. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: If someone is quick in saying about people what they dislike, they will speak about him that with which they have no knowledge.

36. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Whoever prolongs his desire ruins his actions.

37. Once Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was proceeding towards Syria when the countrymen of al-Anbar met him. Seeing him, they began to walk on foot then ran in front of him. He inquired why they were doing so. They replied that this was the way they respected their chiefs. Then he said the following: "By Allah, this does not benefit your chiefs. You are belaboring yourself in this world and earning misery for the next by it. How harmful is the labour in whose wake there is punishment, and how profitable is the case with which there is deliverance from the Fire (of Hell)!

The Imam Admonishing His Son:

38. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to his son al-Hassan (ع): O son! Learn four things and (a further) four things from me: Nothing will harm you if you practice them. The richest of all riches is intelligence; the biggest destitution is foolishness; the most wild of the wild is vanity, and the best achievement is goodness of the moral character.

O my son! You should avoid making friends with a fool because if he intends to benefit you, he will harm you. You should avoid making friends with a miser because he will run away from you when you need him the most. You should avoid making friends with a sinful person because he will sell you for nought. And you should avoid making friends with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you see far things as near and near things as far.

39. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Supererogatory worship cannot bring about nearness to Allah if it hampers what is obligatory.

40. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The tongue of the wise man is behind his heart, while the heart of the fool is behind his tongue.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “This sentence has a strange and beautiful meaning. It means that the wise man does not speak with his tongue except after consulting his mind and exercising his imagination, but the fool quickly utters whatever comes to his tongue without pondering. In this way, the tongue of the wise man follows his heart while the heart of the fool follows his tongue.”

41. This very notion has been related from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in a different version thus: The heart of a fool is in his mouth, while the tongue of the wise man is in his heart. The meaning of both the saying (40 and 41) is the same.

42. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to one of his companions during the latter’s sickness: May Allah make your illness a means for wiping out your sins because there is no reward for sickness but that it erases sins and makes them fall like (dried) leaves. Reward lies in saying by the tongue and doing something with the limbs. Certainly, Allāh, the Glorified One, admits into Paradise by virtue of truthfulness of intention and chastity of heart whomsoever He wishes from among His servants.

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is right in saying that there is no reward for sickness as such because compensation is admissible with regard to how Allah, the Sublime One, deals with His creatures such as causing them grief, illness and the like. However, reward and recompense become admissible with regard to the actions of the creature. This is the difference between the two. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has clarified it through his lustrous knowledge and sound view.

43. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following about Khabbab ibn al-Aratt:[1]

May Allah have mercy on Khabbab ibn al-Aratt since he accepted Islam willingly, immigrated (from Mecca) obediently, remained content with what sufficed him, was pleased with Allah and lived the life of a mujahid.Khabbab ibn al-Aratt was a distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet (ص) and was one of the early Muhajirun. He suffered various sorts of hardships at the hands of the tribesmen of Quraish. He was made to stand in the scorching sun and to lie down on burning pieces of timber, but he did not at all abandon the side of the Holy Prophet (ص). He

accompanied the Holy Prophet (ص) in Badr and other battles. He supported Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in Siffin and Nahrawan. He had left Medina and settled in Kufa. Thus, he died there in 39 A.H. (659 A.D.) at the age of 73. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) led his funeral prayer service. He was buried outside Kufa. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered these mercy-invoking words as he stood at his grave.

44. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Blessed is the person who kept in mind the next life, acted so as to be able to render his account, remained content with what sufficed him and remained pleased with Allah.

45. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Even if I strike thenose of a believer with this, my sword, so he may hate me, he will not hate me, and even if I pile all the wealth of the world before a hypocrite (Muslim) so he may love me, he will not love me. This is so because it is a verdict pronounced by the tongue of the revered Prophet (ص) who said the following: "O Ali! A believer will never hate you and a hypocrite (Muslim) will never love you.[235]

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[235]This is one of the authentic traditions (*ahadīth*) of the Holy Prophet (ص) whose authenticity the scholars of traditions had never doubted. It was narrated by certain companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) such as `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, Imran ibn al-Hasin, Umm al-Mu'minin (mother of the faithful) Umm Salamah and others such as Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) himself who also narrated saying*: By the One Who split the seed and created the soul, verily the Messenger of Allah (ع) and his progeny gave me a promise that no one but a (true) believer will love me, and none but a hypocrite will hate me (Sahīh, Muslim,* Vol. 1, p. 60; [Muslim, in his book, regards the love of Ali as the sign of dissemblance] *Al-Jami'al-Sahih,* Vol. 5, pp. 635, 643; *Al-Sunan,* Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, p. 55; *Al-Sunan,* al-Nisa'i, Vol. 8, pp. 115-116, 117; *Al-Musnad,* Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, pp. 84, 95, 128; Vol. 6, p. 292; *AIlal al-hadith,* Abu Hatim, Vol. 2, p. 400; *Hilyat al-Awliya',* Abu Nu'aym, Vol. 4, p. 185; *Jami'al-Usul,* Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 9, p. 473; *Mujma' az-Zawa'id,* Vol. 9, p. 133; *Manaqib Ali ibn Abu Talib,* Ibn al-Maghazili, pp. 190-195; *Al-Isti`ab,* Vol. 3, p. 1100; *Usd al-Ghaba,* Vol. 4, p. 26; *Al-Isaba,* Vol. 2, p. 509; *Tarikh Baghdad,* Vol. 2, p. 255; Vol. 8, p. 417; Vol. 14, p. 426; *Tarikh, Ibn Kathir,* Vol. 7, p. 354). It was in this way that the companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) used to test the faith (*iman*) or hypocrisy (*nifaq*) of the Muslims through their love or hatred towards Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), as is related from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and Jabir ibn Abdullah [al-Ansari] that*: We (companions of the Holy Prophet [ص]) used to distinguish the hypocrites by their hatred of*

46. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The sin that displeases you is better in the view of Allah than the virtue that makes you proud.[236]

47. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The worth of a man is according to his courage, his truthfulness is according to his balance of temper, his valor is according to his self-respect and his chastity is according to his sense of shame.

48. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Victory is (won) with determination; determination is pondering over thoughts and thoughts are formed by guarding secrets.

49. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: Fear the might of a noble person when he is hungry and that of an ignoble person when he is satisfied.[237].

50. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: The hearts of the people are like wild beasts. If someone tries to tame them, they will pounce back upon him.[238]

Ali ibn Abu Talib (al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 5, p. 635; *Al-Mustadrak,* Vol. 3, p. 129; *Hilyat al-Awliya',* Vol. 6, p. 294; *Mujma'az-Zawa'id,* Vol. 9, pp. 132-133; *Jami' al-Usul,* Vol. 9, p. 473; *Al-Durr al-Manthur,* Vol. 6, pp. 66-67; *Tarikh Baghdad,* Vol. 13, p. 153; *Ar-Riyad an-Nadira,* Vol. 2, pp. 214-215; *Al-Isti`ab,* Vol. 3, p. 1110; *Usd al-Ghaba,* Vol. 4, pp. 29-30).

[236]The person who feels ashamed and repentant after committing a sin and offers repentance before Allah remains safe from the penalty of that sin and deserves the reward of repentance. But the person who, having done a virtuous deed, begins to feel his "superiority" over others and becomes proud of his virtues thinks that he has no apprehension whatever. Thus, he destroys his virtue and remains deprived of the reward of that virtuous deed. Obviously, whoever has erased the shame of his sin by repentance will be better than one who ruins his action by being proud of it without having repented of such a pride.

[237]The meaning is that a man of prestige and esteem never tolerates humiliation or disgrace. If his honor is assailed, he will leap like a hungry lion and break away the shackles of humiliation. If a low and narrow minded person is raised beyond what he deserves, he will not be able to contain himself but, regarding himself very high, he will assail the status of others.

[238]This statement confirms the theory that by nature, human hearts love wildness and that the feeling of love and affection in them is an acquired attribute. Consequently, when the elements and causes of love and affection

51. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following: So long as your status is good, your defects will remain covered.

52. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Themost capable of pardoning is whoever is the most powerful to punish.

53. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Generosity is that which is by one's own initiative because giving on being asked is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.

54. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There is no wealth like wisdom, no destitution like ignorance, no inheritance like refinement and no support like consultation.

55. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience regarding what you covet.

56. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: With wealth, a strange land is a homeland, while with destitution, even a homeland is a strange land.[239] A stranger even in his own homeland.

57. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Contentment is wealth that does not diminish.[240]

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crop up, they get tamed. But when these elements disappear, or when the feelings of hatred are created against them, the people return to wildness and thereafter they return to the path of love and affection with a great deal of difficulty. Do not tease the heart because it is a wild bird. If once it flies away, it will come down with a great deal of difficulty.

[239]A person who has wealth and riches will get friends and acquaintances wherever he may be. He, therefore, will not feel strange in any foreign land. But if he is poor and destitute, he will have no friends even in his homeland because people do not like to make friends with the poor and the destitute, nor to extend relations with them. He is, therefore, a stranger even at home and has no friends or well-wishers.

Whoever has no worldly successor remains unknown:

[240]Contentment means that a man should remain satisfied with what he gets and should not complain if he gets less. If he is not so contented, he will try to satisfy his greed by committing social crimes such as misappropriation, cheating and deceiving others because greed compels one to satisfy one's needs

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "This saying has also been related from the Prophet (ص)."

58. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Wealth is the fountainhead of passions.

59. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who warns you is like one who gives you good tidings.

60. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The tongue is a beast; when it is let loose, it devours.

61. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Woman is a scorpion whose touch is sweet.

62. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If you are met with a greeting, give better greetings in return. If a hand of help is extended to you, do a better favor in return, although the credit will remain with the one who was the first.

63. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who intercedes is the wing of one who seeks.

64. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The people of the world are like travelers who are being carried while they are asleep.

65. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A lack of friends means strangeness.

66. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: To miss what one needs is easier than to beg from an inappropriate person.[241]

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by any means whatever. Then the satisfaction of one's need opens the gate for another need and so on. As a man's needs get satisfied, his craving increases, and he can never get rid of his needs or of dissatisfaction. The increasing dissatisfaction can be stopped only by contentment which makes a man carefree from all wants except the most essential ones. This is that everlasting wealth that gives satisfaction for good.

[241]The shame that is felt in putting a request before an inappropriate person gives more mental pain than the grief in not obtaining its fulfillment.

67. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not feel ashamed for giving little because refusal is smaller than that.

68. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Charity is the adornment of destitution, while gratefulness (to Allah) is the adornment of riches.

69. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If what you aim at does not come about, then do not worry as to what you were.

70. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: You will not find an ignorant person but at one extreme or another (i.e. a person who neglects or a person who exaggerates).

71. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: As intelligence increases, speech decreases.[242]

72. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Time wears out bodies, renews desires, brings death nearer and takes away aspirations. Whoever is successful with it encounters grief, and whoever misses its favors also undergoes hardships.

73. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever places himself as a leader of the people should commence with educating his own self before educating others, and his teaching should be by his own conduct before teaching by the tongue. The person who teaches and instructs his own self is more entitled to esteem than whoever teaches and instructs others.

That is why non-fulfillment of a request can be tolerated, but the obligation of a low and humble person is intolerable. Every self-respecting person will, therefore, prefer deprivation to being under obligation to an inappropriate man and will not tolerate placing his request before a low and mean person.

[242]Being talkative is an indication of a diffused thinking, while diffusion of thought is the result of the unripeness of wisdom. When wisdom attains perfection and understanding ripens, one's mind and thoughts are balanced. Wisdom acquires power and control over the tongue. As over other parts of the body, the tongue does not deed any thinking or anything outside the dictates of wisdom. Obviously, uttering after thinking is short and free from extras. As a man's intelligence increases, his speech decreases and he does not speak save at the opportune moment.

74. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Each breath taken by a man is a step towards his death.[243]

75. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Every countable thing is to pass way and every expected thing must come about.

76. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If matters get mixed up, then the last ones should be appreciated compared to the previous one.[244]

77. It is related that when Dirar ibn Hamzah (the correct: Damrah) ad-Dibabi (or as-Suda'i[245]) went to Mu`awiyah and Mu`awiyah

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[243]That is just as each step makes way for the other, and this exercise by steps is the means of nearing the goal. Similarly, every breath of life serves as a death-knell for the previous one and carries life towards death, as if the breath whose motion is regarded as a sign of life is, in fact, the sign of the passing away of one moment of life and a means of nearing the goal of death because each breath is death for the previous one and life is the name of those very death-carrying breaths. Every breath is a dead body of the life that passed by. Life is the name of living by facing successive deaths.

[244]By looking at a seed, a cultivator can say what plant will come out of it, what fruits, flowers or leaves it will have and what its expanse will be. Likewise, a guess can be made about the success of a student by looking at his labor and effort. The same applies to the failure of some other student by looking at his leisureliness and idleness because the beginning is indicative of the end and the premises of the conclusion. Therefore, if the end of any matter is not visible, its beginning should be looked at. If its beginning is bad, the end, too, will be bad, and if the beginning is good, the end, too, will be good. An auspicious river begins from the very spring.

[245]Dirar ibn Damrah was one of the companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). After the death of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he went to Syria where he met Mu`awiyah. Mu`awiyah said to him, "Describe Ali to me." He replied, "Will you please excuse me from answering this?" But Mu`awiyah emphasized, "You must describe him," whereupon Dirar said the following: "If there is no alternative, then you should know that Ali (ع) was a man whose personality knew no limits, terrific in power, his speech was decisive, his judgements based on justice, his knowledge spread out in all directions and wisdom manifested itself on all his behavior. Among the food he liked the most was the coarse kind and among the clothes, the short (and humble) ones. By Allah, he was among us like one of us. He used to respond to our questions and fulfil all our requests. By Allah, although he used to let us get close to him and he himself was close to us, we did not dare address him due to our feeling of awe towards him nor did we dare to speak first due to his greatness in our hearts. His smile displayed a row

inquired from him about Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he said the following: "I testify that I have seen him on several occasions when night had spread and he was standing in the niche (of the mosque) holding his beard, groaning like a man bitten by a snake and weeping as a grieved man, saying: O world, O world! Get away from me! Why do you present yourself tome?! Or are you eager for me?! You may not get that opportunity to impress me. Deceive some other person. I have no concern with you. I have divorced you thrice after which there is no restitution. Your life is short, your importance is little and your liking is humble. Alas! The provision is little, the way is long, the journey is far and the goal is hard to reach."

On the Subject of Predestination

78. A man inquired from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saying, "Was our going to fight the Syrians destined by Allah?" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) detailed his reply, a selection from which is here:

Woe unto you! You take it as a final and unavoidable destiny[246] (according to which we are bound to act). If it were so, there would have been no question of reward or chastisement and there would have been no sense in Allah's promises or warnings. (On the other hand) Allah, the

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of pearls. He used to honor the pious; to be kind to the needy, to feed the orphan, the near of kin or the needy man in the day of hunger, clothe bare ones and help the vulnerable person. He used to detest the world and its flowering. I testify to all of this." (So far, the testimony is as quoted above by Sayyid ar-Radi). When Mu`awiyah heard this from Dirar, his eyes became full of tears and he said: "May Allah have mercy on Abul-Hassan. He really was so." Then, turning to Dirar he said: How do you feel in his absence, O Dirar?" Dirar replied, "My grief is like that of a woman whose only child is butchered in her own arms" (*Al-Isti`ab*, Vol. 3, pp. 1107-1108; *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, Vol. 2, p. 84; *Sifatul-Safwah*, Ibn al-Jawzi, Vol. 1, p. 121; *Al-Amali*, Abu Ali al-Qali, Vol. 2, p. 147; *Zahr al-Adab*, al-Husari, Vol. 1, pp. 40-41; *Muruj al-Dhahab*, Vol. 2, p. 421; *Ar-Riyad al-Nadira*, Al-Muhibb al-Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 212; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 18, pp. 225-226).

[246]The end of this story is that after this, the man inquired, "What kind of destiny it was by which we had to go?" and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "قضاء (destiny) means the command of Allah. For example, He has said: *wa qada rabbuka alla ta'budu illa iyyahu* (And your Lord commanded that you shall worship none but Him [Holy Quran, 17: 23]). Here, the Arabic word قضاء stands for commanded.

Glorified One, has ordered His servants to act according to their free will and has cautioned them and protected them (from evil). He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much (reward) in return for little action. He is disobeyed, not because He is overpowered. He is obeyed but not by force. He did not send prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without a purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth and all that is in between them in vain. That is the imagination of those who disbelieve: "... then woe unto those who disbelieve because of the fire" (Holy Quran, 38: 27).

79. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Take wise points from wherever they may be because if a wise saying is in the bosom of a hypocrite, it flutters in his bosom till it comes out and settles with others of its own category: in the bosom of the believer.

80. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Therefore, get wise sayings even though from people of hypocrisy.

81. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The worth of every man is in his attainments.[247]

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is the statement whose value cannot be assessed, with which no wise saying can be weighed and with which no other sentence can be matched.

82. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I impart to you five things which, if you ride your camels fast in search of them, you will find them worth the effort:

None of you should repose hope save in his Lord (Allah); none of you should fear anything save his sin; none should feel ashamed of saying, "I do not know" when he is asked about a matter which he does

[247]The real value of a person is his knowledge (and perfection of attainment). His worth and status will be in accordance with the status of knowledge and attainment which he holds. Eyes that are conscious of real values do not look at the face, features, tallness of stature, size or worldly pomp and status. Rather, they look at the attainments of a person and assess his worth according to these attainments. The conclusion is that a man should strive to acquire distinction and be admonished. The worth of every person is according to the extent of his knowledge.

not know; none should feel ashamed of learning a thing that he does not know and you should practice endurance because endurance is for belief what the head is for the body: Just as there is no good in a body without the head, there is no good in belief without endurance.

83. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following about a man who praised him much, although he did not admire him: I am below what you express and above what you feel in your heart.

84. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The survivors of the sword are large in number and have many offspring.

85. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever abandons saying, "I do not know" meets his destruction.

86. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I love the opinion of an old man more than the determination of a young man: (or according to another version: more than the martyrdom of a young man.)

87. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I wonder about the man who loses hope despite the possibility of seeking forgiveness.

88. (Imam) Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir (ع), has related from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) that the Imam had said: There were two sources of deliverance from the punishment of Allah: one of them has been raised up, while the other is before you. You should, therefore, adhere to it. The source of deliverance, which has been raised up is the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (ص), while the source of deliverance that remains is the seeking of forgiveness. Allah, the Glorified One, has said the following: "And Allah is not to chastise them while you are among them, nor is Allah to chastise them while yet they seek [His] forgiveness' (Holy Quran, 8: 33).

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is one of the most beautiful ways of deriving the meaning and a most delicate manner of an interpretation.

89. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If a man behaves properly in matters between himself and Allah, then Allah will keep proper the matters between him and other people. And if a man keeps proper the affairs of his next life, then Allah keeps proper for him the affairs of this world. Whoever is a preacher for himself is protected by Allah.

90. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The perfect jurist of Islam is whoever does not let people lose hope from the mercy of Allah, does not make him despondent of Allah's kindness and does not make him feel safe from Allah's punishment.

91. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The hearts get disgusted as bodies get disgusted; so look for beautiful wise sayings for them.

92. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The most humble knowledge is that which remains on the tongue and the most honorable one is that which manifests itself through (the action of) the limbs and the organs of the body.

93. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: None of you should say, "O Allah! I seek Your protection from affliction" because there is none who is not afflicted. But whoever seeks Allah's protection should seek it from misguiding troubles because Allah, the Glorified One, says the following: "And be admonished that your wealth and your children are a trial" (Holy Quran, 8: 28). It means that He tries people with wealth and progeny in order to distinguish one who is displeased with his livelihood from one who is happy with what he has been given. Even though Allah, the Glorified One, knows them more than they know themselves, yet He does so to let them perform actions with which they earn reward or punishment. This is so because some of them like to have male (children) and dislike to have female (children), whereas some like to amass wealth and dislike adversity.

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is a wonderful interpretation related from the Imam (ع).

94. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked what is good; he replied thus: Good is not that your wealth and progeny should be much, but good is that your knowledge should be much, your forbearance should be great and that you should vie with other people in worshipping Allah. If you do good deeds, you should thank Allah, but if you commit evil, you should seek forgiveness of Allah. In this world, good is for two persons only: the man who commits sins but rectifies them by repentance, and the man who hastens towards good deeds.

95. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Action accompanied by fear for Allah does not fail; how can a thing fail that has been accepted?![248]

96. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The persons most attracted to the prophets are those who know most what the prophets have brought. Then Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) recited this verse: "Verily, of men, the nearest to Abraham are surely those who followed him and this (Our) Prophet (ص) (Muhammad [ص]) and those who believe" (Holy Quran, 3: 68). Then he said the following: The friend of Muhammad (ص) is whoever obeys Allah, even though he may have no blood relationship [with him], and the enemy of Muhammad (ص) is whoever disobeys Allah even though he may have near kinship [with the Prophet (ص)].

97. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard about a Kharijite who said the mid-night prayers and recited the Holy Quran, then he said: Sleeping in a state of firm belief is better than praying in a state of doubt.

98. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When you hear a tradition, test it according to the criterion of intelligence not to that of mere hearsay because those who relate knowledge are numerous, but those who safeguard it are few.

99. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard a man reciting the following: "Verily, we are Allah's, and verily to Him shall we return" (Holy Quran, 2: 156). The Imam (ع) said: Our saying, "Inna li'llah (Verily we are Allah's) is an admission of His majesty over us, while our saying, "Wa inna ilayhi raji'un" (and verily to Him shall we return) is an admission of our being mortal.

100. Some people praised Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in his presence. The Imam (ع) said: O Lord! You know me better than I know myself, and I know myself better than they know. O Lord! Make us better people than what they think and forgive us for what they do not know.

101. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The fulfillment of (others') needs becomes a lasting virtue in three ways: regarding it as small, so that

[248]Allah says the following: "Verily, Verily, Allah does accept (an offering only) from those who guard (themselves against evil)" (Holy" Quran, 5: 27).

it attains bigness, concealing it so that it may manifest itself, and doing it quickly so that it becomes pleasant.

102. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Shortly, a time will come for people when high [government] positions will be given only to those who defame others, when vicious people will be regarded as witty and just will be regarded as weak. People will regard charity as a loss, consideration for kinship as a burden and worship as grounds for claiming greatness among others. At such a time, authority will be exercised through the counsel of women, and there will be posting of young boys in high positions and the running of the administration by eunuchs.

103. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was publicly seen in worn-out clothes with patches. When it was pointed out to him, he said: With it [such shabbiness of dressing] the heart fears, the mind feels humble and the believers emulate it. Certainly this world and the next are two enemies of each other, two paths in opposite directions. Whoever likes this world and loves it hates the next and is its enemy. These two are like the East and the West. If the walker between them gets near to one, he gets farther from the other. After all, they are like two fellow-wives.

104. It is related by Nawf al-Bikali that: "One night, I saw Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) coming out of his bed and looking at the stars. Then he said to me: 'O Nawf! Are you awake or are you sleeping?' I said: 'I am awake, O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)!' whereupon the Imam (ع) said the following: O Nawf! Blessed be those who abstain from this world and are eager for the next one. They are the people who regard this earth as the floor; its dust as their bed-cloth, and its water as their perfume. They recite the Holy Quran in low tones and supplicate in high tones then they are cut off from the world like Īsa (Jesus) was.

'O Nawf! Prophet Dawud (David) (ع) rose up at a similar hour one night and said: This is the hour when whatever a person pleads, his plea is granted to him unless he is a tax-collector, an intelligence man, a police officer, a lute player or a drummer.'"

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: "It is also said that 'artabah' means طبل (drum) and 'kubah' means lute."

105. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Allah has placed on you some obligations which you should not ignore, has laid down for you

limits which you should not transgress, has prohibited you from certain things which you should not violate and has kept quiet about certain things, but He has not left them out by mistake so that you should not find them.

106. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If people give up something relevant to religion to set right their worldly affairs, Allah will inflict upon them something more harmful than that.

107. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Often the ignorance of a learned man ruins him while the knowledge he has does not avail him.

108. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: In man, there is a piece of flesh attached to him: a vein, and it is the strangest thing in him. It is the heart. It has a store of wisdom and things contrary to wisdom. If it sees a ray of hope, eagerness humiliates it, and when eagerness increases, greed ruins it. If disappointment overtakes it, grief kills it. If anger rises in it, a serious rage develops. If it is blessed with pleasure, it forgets to be cautious. If it becomes fearing, it becomes heedless. If peace extends all round, it becomes neglectful. If it earns wealth, freedom from care puts it in the wrong. If trouble befalls it, impatience makes it humble. If it faces starvation, distress overtakes it. If hunger attacks it, weakness seats it. If its food increases, heaviness of stomach pains it. Thus, every shortness is harmful to it and every excess is injurious to it.

109. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: We (members of the Prophet's family) are like the pillow in the middle. Whoever lags behind has to come forward to meet it, while whoever exceeds the bounds has to return to it.

110. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: None can establish the rule of Allāh, the Glorified One, except whoever shows no relenting (in the matter of right), who does not behave like wrong doers and who does not run after greed.

111. Sahl ibn Hunayf al-Ansari died at Kufa after his return from the battle of Siffin and he was very much loved by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). On this occasion, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Even if a mountain had loved me, it will have crumbled down.

Sayyid ar-Radi says that the meaning of this is that since the trial of the man who loves Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) will be so, severe troubles will leap towards him and this is not the case except with the God-fearing, the virtuous and the select good ones. There is another similar saying of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's individuals, namely:

112. Whoever loves us, members of the Household (of the Prophet [ص]), should be prepared to face destitution.

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this has been interpreted in a different way as well, but on this occasion, it is not fit to mention here.[249]

113. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: No wealth is more profitable than wisdom; no loneliness is more estranging than vanity, no wisdom is as good as tact, no honor is like fear from Allah, no companion is like the goodness of moral character, no inheritance is like civility, no guide is like promptitude, no trade is like virtuous deeds, no profit is like the Divine reward, no self-control is like inaction in time of doubt, no abstention is like that from prohibitions, no knowledge is like thinking, no worship is like the carrying out of obligations, no belief is like modesty and endurance, no attainment is like humility, no honor is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance and no support is more reliable than consultation.

114. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: At a time when virtue is in vogue in the world and among people, if a person entertains an evil suspicion about another person from whom nothing evil has ever been seen, then he has been unjust. And at a time when vice is in vogue in the world and among people, if a man entertains a good idea about another person, he flings himself in peril.

115. It was said to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): "How are you, O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)?" He replied: How can he be whom life is driving towards death, whose state of health can change into sickness any moment and who is to be caught (by death) from his place of safety.

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[249]Perhaps the other meaning of this saying is this: "Whoever loves us should not hanker after worldly matters even though in consequence he may have to face destitution and poverty; but he should rather remain content and avoid seeking worldly benefits."

116. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There are many people who are given time (by Allah) through good treatment towards them and many who are deceived because their sinful activities are veiled (by Allah) and many who are impressed by good talk about themselves. And Allah does not try anyone as seriously as He tries him whom He allows time (to remain sinful).

117. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Two categories of persons will face ruin on my account: whoever exaggerates in loving me and whoever hates me intensely.

118. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: To miss an opportunity brings about grief.

119. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The example of the world is like a serpent: It is soft in touch but its inside is full of venom. An ignorant person who has fallen into deceit is attracted towards it, but a wise and intelligent man stays on guard against it.

120. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked about the tribesmen of Quraish. He replied as follows: As for Banu Makhzum, they are the blossoms of the tribesmen of Quraish. It is delightful to talk to their men and to marry their women. As for Ban Abd Shams, they are far-sighted and cautious about all that is hidden from them. As for ourselves (Banu Hashim), we spend whatever we get and are very generous in offering ourselves to death. Consequently, those people are more numerous, more contriving and more ugly while we are most eloquent, well-wishing and handsome.

121. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: What a difference there is between two kinds of actions: “A deed whose pleasure passes away but its (ill) consequence remains, and a deed whose hardship passes away but its reward stays.

122. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was present at a funeral when he heard someone laugh. He, therefore, said: Is it that death has been ordained only for others? Is it that right is obligatory only on others? Is it that those whom we see departing on their journey of death will come back to us? We lay them down in their graves then enjoy their estate (as if we will live for good after them). We have ignored every preacher, man or woman and have exposed ourselves to every catastrophe.

123. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Blessed be whoever humbles himself, whose livelihood is pure, whose heart is chaste, whose habits are virtuous, who spends his savings (in the name of Allah), who prevents his tongue from speaking nonsense, who keeps people safe from evil, who is pleased with the (Prophet's) Sunnah and who is unconnected with innovation (in religion).

Sayyid ar-Radi says that Some people attribute this and the previous saying to the Messenger of Allah (ص).

124. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The jealousy of a woman (with co-wives) is heresy, while the jealousy of a man is a part of belief.

125. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I am defining Islam as none has defined it before me: Islam is submission, submission is conviction, conviction is affirmation, affirmation is acknowledgment, acknowledgment is carrying out (of obligations) and carrying out obligations is action.

126. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I wonder at the miser who is speeding towards the very destitution from which he wants to run away and misses the very ease of life which he covets. Consequently, he passes his life in this world like the destitute but will have to render an account in the next world like the rich.

I wonder at the proud man who was just a drop of semen the other day and will turn into a corpse tomorrow. I wonder at the man who doubts Allah although He sees His creations. I wonder at him who has forgotten death although he sees people dying. I wonder at him who denies the second life although he has seen the first. I wonder at him who inhabits this transient abode but ignores the everlasting one.

127. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever falls short of actions falls into grief, and Allah has nothing to do with him who spares nothing from his wealth in the name of Allah.

128. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Guard yourselves against cold in its (seasonal) beginning and welcome it towards its end because it affects bodies in the same way as it affects plants. In the beginning, it destroys them, but in the end it gives them fresh leaves.[1]

During autumn, protection from cold is necessary because with the change of weather, the temperature of the body also changes and ailments such as flue, catarrh, cough, etc. occur. This is so because bodies are accustomed to hot weather. When suddenly cold comes on, the tissue becomes contracted, and cold dryness increases in the body. Thus, bathing with cold water soon after bathing with hot water is harmful for this very reason. With hot water, the tissues expand, so they at once admit the effect of cold water and in consequence the natural heat of the body is affected. On the other hand, there is no need for protection from cold during spring season, nor is it harmful for the health because the body is already accustomed to cold. Thus, the temperate cold of the spring is not unpleasant to the body. Rather, with the decline of cold, there is an increase of heat and dampness in the body as a result of which growth gets impetus, natural heat rises, the body grows, the temperaments feel pleasant and the spirit is joyful.

Similarly, there is the same effect in the plant world. Thus, during autumn, due to the prevalence of coldness and dryness, the leaves wither, the vegetative power decreases, the freshness of the plants fades and there is a death-like effect on the green areas. Spring brings the message of life for them. Then with the blowing of healthy winds, blossoms begin to sprout, plants become fresh and healthy, and forests and wildernesses acquire a green hue.

129. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The Greatness of the Creator appreciated by you will belittle the creatures in your view.

130. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) returned from (the battle of) Siffin and noticed the graves outside Kufa, he said: O residents of houses which give a sense of loneliness, of depopulated areas, of gloomy graves! O people of the dust! O victims of strangeness! O people of loneliness and O people of desolateness! You have gone ahead and preceded us while we are following you and will join you. The houses (you left) have been inhabited by others; the wives (you left) have been married by others; the properties have been distributed (among heirs). This is the news about those around us; what is the news about things around you?!

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) turned to his companions and said: Beware! If they were allowed to speak they will inform you that: "Verily, the best provision is fear of Allah" (Holy Quran, 2: 197).

About Those Who Unfairly Blame Life in this World

131. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard a man speaking ill of life in this world, so he said to him: O you who abuses the world! O you who has been deceived by it and cheated by its wrongs! Do you thus covet the world then abuse it?! Do you accuse it or should it accuse you?! When did it bewilder you or deceive you, whether by the decay and fall of your forefathers, or by the sleeping places of your mothers under the ground? How much did you look after them in their illness and nursed them during sickness, desiring them to be cured and consulting physicians for them in the morning when your medicine did not avail them and your wailing for them did not benefit them? Your mourning over them did not prove useful to them and you could not achieve your aim. You could not ward off (death) from them with all your power. In fact, through the dying man, the world presented an illustration for you and showed you by the example of his falling down how you will also fall.

Certainly, this world is a house of truth for whoever appreciates it, a place of safety for whoever understands it, a house of riches for whoever collects provision from it (for the next world), and a house of instructions for whoever draws instruction from it. It is the place of worship for those who love Allah, the place of praying for the angels of Allah, the place where the revelation of Allah descends, and the marketing place for those devoted to Allah. Herein, they earned mercy and herein they acquired Paradise by way of profit.

Therefore, who can abuse it when it has announced its departure and called out that it will leave?! It had given news of its own destruction and the death of its people. By its hardship, it set an example of their hardships. By its pleasures, it created eagerness for the pleasures (of the next world). It brings ease in the evening and grief in the morning by way of persuasion, dissuasion, alarm and warning. People abuse it on the morning of their repentance, but there are others who will praise it on the Day of Judgement. The world recalled to them the next life and they bore it in mind. It related to them (things of the next life) and they

acknowledged them. It preached to them and they took lesson therefrom.[250]

132. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There is an angel of Allah who calls out every day: "Beget children for death! Collect wealth for destruction and raise construction for ruin!"

133. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: This world is a transient place, not a place of stay. The people herein are of two types: One is a man who sold away his soul (to his passions) and thus ruined it, and the other is a man who purchased his soul (by controlling his desires) and freed it.

134. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A friend is not a friend unless he affords protection to his comrade on three occasions: in his adversity, in his absence and at the time of his death.

135. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever is bestowed four things is not disallowed four things: whoever is allowed to pray is not deprived of the response to it; whoever is allowed to offer repentance is not deprived of its acceptance; whoever is allowed to seek forgiveness is not deprived of forgiveness, and whoever is allowed to be grateful is not deprived of furtherance of favors.

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is confirmed by the Book of Allah. About praying, Allah says, "Call unto Me, I will answer you" (Holy Quran, 4: 60). About forgiveness Allah says, "And whoever does evil, or wrongs his own self and thereafter seeks Allah's forgiveness shall find Allah oft-Forgiving, most Merciful" (Holy Quran, 4: 110). About gratefulness He says, "If you show gratitude, I will increase (my favors) to you" (Holy Quran, 14: 7). About repentance He says, "Verily,

[250]Every speaker and preacher manifests the force of his speech in subjects in which he is well-versed. If he has to change the subject, neither will his mind move, nor will his tongue be able to speak out. But anyone's intellect has the capability of adaptation: his mind has the power of imagination. It can turn round his utterances in whatever manner he likes and can show the excellence of speech on whatever subject he desires. Consequently, when the tongue, which had for so long been abusing the world and unveiling its deceitfulness, starts praising the world, it shows the same mastery of speech and power of argument which have always been its chief distinction. Then, the use of commendatory words does not alter the principle. Although the ways are different, the objective remains one and the same.

repentance (acceptable) with Allah is only for those who do evil out of ignorance then turn (to Allah) soon (thereafter); to these, Allah will turn mercifully, and Allah is all-Knowing, all-Wise" (Holy Quran, 4: 17).

136. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: For the God-fearing, prayers is a means of seeking nearness to Allah, and for the weak, the hajj is as good as jihad. For everything there is a tax, and the tax of the body is fasting. The jihad of a woman is to afford pleasant company to her husband.

137. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Seek livelihood by giving alms.

138. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever is sure of a good return is generous in giving.

139. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Assistance is allowed according to need.

140. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever is moderate does not become destitute.

141. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A small family is one of the ways of (securing) ease.

142. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Loving one another is half the measure of wisdom.

143. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Grief is half the old age.

144. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Endurance comes according to affliction. Whoever beats his hand on the thigh in his affliction ruins all his good actions.

145. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There are many who fast but whose fast is nothing more than hunger and thirst. There are many who offer of prayers and whose prayer is no better than wakefulness and hardship: the sleep as well as the eating and drinking of the intelligent (God-fearing) person is far better.

146. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Protect your belief by charity; guard your wealth by paying Allah's share thereof, and ward off the waves of calamity by praying.

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib's Conversation with Kumayl Ibn Ziyad Al-Nakh`I[251]

People are of three kinds:

147. Kumayl ibn Ziyad has related saying that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) caught hold of his hand and took him to the graveyard. When the Imam (ع) had passed through the graveyard and left the city behind, he let a deep sigh and said the following:

O Kumayl these hearts are containers. The best of them is that which preserves (its contents); so, preserve what I say to you:

People are of three types: One is the scholar and the Divine. Then, the seeker of knowledge who is also on the way to deliverance. Then the common rot who runs after every caller and bends in the direction of every wind. They seek no light from the glory of knowledge and do not take protection from any reliable support.

O Kumayl! Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you have to guard the wealth. Wealth decreases by spending, while knowledge multiplies by spending, and the results of wealth die as wealth decays.

O Kumayl! Knowledge is belief which is acted upon. With it, man acquires obedience during his life and a good name after his death. Knowledge is the ruler while wealth is ruled upon.

O Kumayl! Those who amass wealth are dead even though they may be living, while those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives. Their bodies are not available but their figures exist in

[251]Kumayl ibn Ziyad an-Nakh`i was the holder of the secrets of the Imamate and one of the most prominent companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). He held a great status in knowledge and attainment and a chief place in abstinence and Godliness. He was Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib's Governor of Hit for some time. He was killed by bloody-thirsty al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thawafi in the year 83 A.H. (702 A.D.) although he was ninety years old.... He was buried outside Kufa.

the hearts. Look, here is a heap of knowledge (and Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع] pointed to his bosom). I wish I could get someone to bear it. Yes, I did find (such a person), but either he was one who could not be relied upon, or he was one who exploits the religion for worldly gains and, by virtue of Allah's favors on him, he will dominate the people, and through Allah's pleas he will master His devotees. Or he was one who was obedient to the hearers of the truth but there was no intelligence in his bosom. At the first appearance of doubt, he will entertain misgivings in his heart.

So, neither this nor that was good enough. Either the man is eager for pleasures, easily led away by passions, or is covetous for collecting and hoarding wealth. Neither of them has any regard for religion in any matter. The nearest example of these is the loose cattle. This is the way that knowledge dies away with the death of its bearers.

O Lord! Yes! Yet the earth is never devoid of those who maintain Allah's plea either openly and reputedly or, being afraid, as hidden in order that Allah's pleas and proofs should not be rebutted. How many are they and where are they? By Allah, they are few in number, but they are great in esteem before Allah. Through them, Allah guards His pleas and proofs till they entrust them to others like themselves and sow the seeds thereof in the hearts of those who are like them.

Knowledge has led them to real understanding, so they have associated themselves with the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easy going regard as hard. They endear what the ignorant take as strange. They live in this world with their bodies here but their spirits resting in the high above. They are the vicegerents of Allah on His earth and callers to His religion. O, how I yearn to see them!

Go away, O Kumayl, wherever you wish!

148. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Man is hidden under his tongue.[252] You cannot know his worth and value.

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[252]The meaning is that a man's worth can be known by his speech because the speech of every person is indicative of his mind and manners. By virtue of it, his feelings and temperament can be very easily assessed. Therefore, so long as he is silent, his weakness as well as attainments are concealed, but when he speaks, his real self manifests itself.

Man is hidden under his tongue... unless he speaks,

149. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever does not know his own worth is ruined.

On Preaching

150. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to a man who had requested him to preach: Do not be like him who hopes for (bliss in) the next life without action and delays repentance by prolonging his desires, who utters words like ascetics in this world but whose deeds are like those who are eager for it. If he is granted something of it, he does not feel satisfied. If he is denied, he is not content. He is not grateful for what he gets and covets an increase in whatever remains with him. He curbs others (from wrongdoing) but not his own self. He commands others for what he himself does not do. He loves the virtuous but does not behave like them. He hates the vicious but he himself is one of them. He dislikes death because of the excess of his sins but adheres to that because of which he is afraid of death.

If he falls ill, he feels ashamed: if he is healthy, he feels secure and indulges in amusements. When he recovers from illness, he feels vain about himself. When he is afflicted, he loses hope. If distress befalls him, he prays like a bewildered man. When he finds ease of life, he falls into deceit and turns his face away. His heart overpowers him by means of imaginary things while he cannot control his heart by his conviction. For others, he is afraid of small sins, but for himself, he expects more rewards than his performance. If he becomes wealthy, he becomes self-conscious and falls into vice. If he is impoverished, he despairs and becomes weak. He is brief when he is doing a good thing but goes too far when he is begging. When passion overtakes him, he is quick in committing sin but delays repentance. If hardship befalls him, he goes beyond the canons of the (Islamic) community. He describes instructive events but does not take instruction himself. He preaches at length but does not accept any preaching for himself. He is tall on speech but short on action. He aspires for things that will perish and ignores things that will last for good. He regards profit as loss and loss as profit. He fears death but does nothing in its anticipation.

He regards the sins of others as big but considers the same things for himself as small. If he does something in obedience to Allah, he considers it much, but if others do the same, he considers it small. He,

therefore, rebukes others but flatters himself. Entertainment in the company of the wealthy is dearer to him than remembrance (of Allah) with the poor; he passes verdicts against others for his own interests and does not do so against himself for others' interests. He guides others but misguides himself. He is obeyed by others but he himself disobeys (Allah). He seeks the fulfillment of obligations (to himself) but does not fulfil his own obligations (towards others). He fears the people (and deeds) for others besides his Lord (Allah) and does not fear his Lord in dealing with the public.

Sayyid ar-Radi says that if this book had contained nothing save this short statement, it will have sufficed as a successful piece of preaching, a specimen of high philosophy, an objective of wisdom for the onlooker and a source of instruction for the meditative onlooker.

151. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Every human being has to meet the end, sweet or sour.

152. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Every comer has to return, and after returning, it is as though he never existed.

153. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The one who endures does not miss success although it may take a long time.

154. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever agrees with the action of a group of persons is as though he joins them in that action. And everyone who joins in wrong commits two sins: one sin for committing the wrong and the other for agreeing with it.

155. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Adhere to your covenants and entrust their fulfillment to steadfast persons.

156. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: On you lies (the obligation of) obedience to the person about whom you cannot plead the excuse of ignorance.[253] But it will ever remain on the oppressor.

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[253] Just as Allah sent down a series of prophets by way of His justice and mercy to guide and direct us towards a perfect life and even a better hereafter, in the same way, He laid down the system of the Imamate to protect the creed from alteration so that every Imam may in his time save the Divine teachings from the onslaught of personal desires and give directions about the correct principles of Islam. And just as it is obligatory to know the originator of

157. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Your minds are opened when you see, and you are guided when you receive guidance, and you are made to hear when you do hear.

158. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Remonstrate with your brother by being kind to him, and respond to his evil by being generous to him.

159. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If one places himself where he may be charged, let him not blame those who may think ill of him.

160. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who possesses prefers himself over others.

161. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who follows only his view perishes, and one who consults with others shares their wisdom

162. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who hides his secret holds his own option,.

163. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Poverty is the greatest death.

164. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If one is fair to another who is not fair to him, it is as though he worships him.

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the religion (i.e. the Prophet [ص]), in the same way, it is necessary to know the protector of the religion. Whoever remains ignorant of him cannot be excused because the issue of Imamate is supported by so many proofs and testimonies that no intelligent person can find any way to deny it. Thus, the Holy Prophet (ص) has said, "Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his times dies the death of *jahiliyya,* the period of ignorance and oppression. One's life-span is limited, but the punishment for oppression is Hell. Its most fearful aspect is that life there will last forever, without an end, and there will be no death for one to be spared its punishment. This is why, if an oppressor kills someone, with such killing, the oppression terminates, and there is no further scope for any further oppression on the same person. A Persian couplet says:

The effect of oppression on us has passed away,

165. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: No creature should be obeyed so long as such obedience means disobedience of the Creator.

166. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: No blame should be placed on one in delaying taking what belongs to him; blame should be on one who takes what does not belong to him.

167. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Conceit stops one from seeking perfection.

168. The undertaking is near, but company is not.

169. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Morning surely shines for those who have vision.

170. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Abandoning a sin is easier than seeking help.

171. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: How often one meal blocks many!

172. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: People are enemies of what they do not know.

173. One who welcomes various views gets to know where error lies.

174. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who sharpens his weapon seeking revenge against those who incur the Wrath of Allah will be strong enough to kill those who are strong in committing falsehood.

175. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If you fear doing something, then do it because your fear is greater than the deed itself.

176. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The mechanism whereby one earns mastership is forbearance.

177. Reprimand the evil doer by rewarding the doer of righteousness.

178. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Remove evil from the chest of others by eradicating it from your own.

179. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Fanatically insisting on disagreeing poisons one's view.

180. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Greed is perpetual bondage.

181. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The fruit of carelessness is regret, whereas the fruit of determination is safety.

182. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Preferring silence over articulating wisdom produces nothing good; likewise is to speak out of ignorance.

183. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: No two cases vary from each other except that one of them is falsehood.

184. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Never have I ever doubted the truth whenever it was shown to me.

185. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Never have I told a lie, nor was I ever called a liar. Never did I ever stray, nor could any use me to cause others to stray.

186. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The oppressor who starts the oppression will tomorrow bite his hand (in regret).

187. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Departure (from this world) is nigh.

188. One who openly opposes what is right perishes.

189. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who is not saved by patience will be finished by impatience.

190. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: How strange! Should caliphate be obtained through friends and relatives?!

Al-Shareef al-Radi, for whom verses of poetry are narrated, has said a couple of lines the gist of which is as follows:

If you through shura took charge of them,
How so since those whose advice is to be sought were absent?!
And if you through kinsfolk argued with the opponent,
Others are more worthy of and nearer than you to the Prophet.

191. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One in this life is a target of death, a loot to calamities. With every sip there is hardship, with every morsel there is pain. Whenever a servant of Allah receives a blessing, he bids farewell to another. Whenever he welcomes a new day, he bids farewell for its sake to another. This is so because we are assistants of the fates: Every breath we draw is a target of death; so, how can we hope to last since this night and this day never raise anything in honor except that they are more swift in destroying what they build and scatter what they gather?

192. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O son of Adam! Anything you earn beyond your need is stored for others.

193. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Hearts have desires, coming or going; so, approach your hearts according to their desires and approaches, for if you force the heart, you will blind it.

194. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: What shall I satisfy my anger when I am enraged? Is it when I am unable to seek revenge, so it will be said to me: "Why did you not have patience?" Or should I do it when I am able, so it will be said to me: "Why did you not forgive?"!

195. Passing by some garbage, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: This is some people were too miser to give others.

In another narrative, he is reported as having said, "This is what you used to compete with each other for!"

196. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: None of your wealth was wasted so long as it provided you with admonishment.

197. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: These hearts wear out just as bodies wear out; so, seek for them beautiful pieces of wisdom

198. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), having heard the Kharijites say, “There is no government except Allah’s”, said: “A true statement intended to reap falsehood.”

199. Describing the mobs, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: They are the ones who overwhelm when they gather and who are known when they disperse. It is said that he, peace be upon him, rather said, “They are the ones who do harm when they gather and they do good when they disperse.” The Imam (ع) was asked, “When understand their mischief when they gather, but what is the benefit when they disperse?” The Imam (ع) said, “Each one of them returns to his profession, so people benefit from them, such as the builder returning to build, the weaver returns to his craft and the baker returns to his bakery, and so on.”

200. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following when a criminal was brought to him escorted by mobs: There is no welcome for you here, O faces that are not seen except when a bad deed is committed.

201. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: With every human being, there are two guardian angels. When fate comes, they make room for him; fate is a secure protection..

202. Talhah and az-Zubair said to the Imam (ع), “We shall swear the oath of allegiance to you provided we are your prtners in this matter (in caliphate).” Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: No, but you both are partners when strength and aid are sought, and you both are aides against inability and extreme effort.

203. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O people! Fear Allah Who hears you when you speak, Who knows what you hide in your breasts, and be more swift than death which catches up with you when you flee, which take you when you stay, and which remembers you when you forget about it.

204. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not be discouraged by ingrates from doing good deeds, for you may be thanked by those who do not benefit from your good deed and who still are grateful to you for it. You may obtain gratitude from a grateful person much more than what someone who hides it has wasted, “... and Allah loves the doers of righteousness.”

205 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Every container becomes straitened by what is put in it except the container of knowledge: It expands.

206. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The first compensation for a clement person for his clemency is that people are his supporters against the ignorant ones.

207. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If you are not clement, then put on the garb of clemency, for many are those who imitate others and who become almost just like them.

208. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who holds himself to account succeeds. When who overlooks it loses. One who is cautious earns security. One who receives admonishment expands his vision. One who expands his vision gains understanding, and who gains understanding earns knowledge.

209. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The life of this world shall be kind to us after being cruel to us just as a she-camel that rejects those who milk it but turns with affection to its newborn. Having said so, the Imām (ع) recited the following verse: "And We wished to be gracious to those who were being oppressed in the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and to make them heirs" (Quran, 28:5).

210. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Fear Allah like one who is willing to risk everything [just to please Allāh], who urges himself to walk towards Allah, who starts in awe, who looks into the outcomes of matters, into the penalty of anything forbidden, who is apprehensive of the final end.

211. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Generosity is the guard of honors. Clemency is ship's restrainer. Forgiveness is the zakat of victory. Solace is your compensation for one who betrayed you. Consultation is the same as guidance. One who sticks only to his own view takes a risk. Patience struggles against calamities. Impatience aids against time's fluctuations. The best of wealth is to abandon high hopes. How many are the minds that are subdued by aggressive desires! A sign of success is to remember experience. Affection is a useful kinship. And do not place your trust in someone who has no patience.

212. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One's self-conceit is one of the envies of his own mind.

213. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Overlook imperfections and pains and you will always be pleased.

214. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One whose stem is lean, his leaves will be thick. (That is, one who is kind to others will grow in health.)

215. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Disputes destroy views.

216. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who wins becomes greater.

217. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: In the alterations of conditions lies the knowledge of the gems of men.

218. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Envying a friend is a sign of fault in one's friendship.

219. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Most places where minds are conquered fall under the glitter of high hopes.

220. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It is not fair to put an end to trust by entertaining doubt.

221. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: How miserable the ration of a servant of Allāh to the Hereafter is if he oppresses Allāh's servants!

222. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The very best of a generous man's acts of generosity is that he is mindless of what he knows (of people's faults).

223. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who is attired with the outfit of modesty, people never see his fault.

224. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Through abundance of silence does one earn respect. Through fairness does one win lovers. Through acts of favors does one's value get greater. Through humility

does one's blessing become complete. Through bearing hardships, loftiness is earned. Through fair dealing, an opponent is subdued. And through clemency with regard to a shallow-minded person does one earn supporters.

225. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: How strange it is that the envious ones overlook the soundness of their own bodies!

226. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A covetous person is tied with the ropes of humiliation.

227. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked about imān. He said: Imān is a knowledge with the heart, an admission with the tongue, and an action according to the [Islamic] injunctions.

228. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If one becomes sad about this world, he becomes angry with what Allāh decrees. One who complains about a calamity that befell him, he complains against his Lord. And one who goes to a wealthy man and humbles himself to him on account of his wealth wipes out two-thirds of his creed. If one recites the Qur'ān, and when he dies he goes to hell, he is one of those who used to mock the Signs of Allāh. If one keeps talking about his love for this world, his heart will be burnt by it in three instances: a worry which he never overcomes, a miserliness which never abandons him, and a hope which he never realizes.

229. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Satisfaction suffices for wealth and good manners for a bliss. He (ع) was asked about the meaning of this verse: "... We shall let him lead a good life." He (ع) said, "It (good life) is satisfaction."

230. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Be partners of one to whom sustenance go for this is the best means for acquiring wealth and the most worthy of earning a good luck.

231. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following in explanation of the verse saying, "Allāh enjoins you to abide by justice and kindness": Justice means equity, while kindness is doing others favors.

232. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If one gives with the short hand, he will be given with the long one.

Al-Radi has said, "The meaning of this statement is that if one spends out of his wealth in the way of goodness and kindness, though it may be little, Allah Almighty will make its reward great. The short hand here is a reference to that of the servant of Allah, whereas the long one is a connotation of the Lord, the most Exalted One, Who is never weakened by giving and Who provides with a lot for what is little.

233. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not invite anyone to a duel, but if you are called upon to duel, respond, because one who calls to a duel is an oppressor, and the oppressor is always defeated.

234. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The best of women's attributes are the men's worst: self-conceit, cowardice and miserliness. So if a woman is self-conceited, she will not let one approach her (in bed). If she is miser, she safeguards her wealth and that of her husband. And if she is a coward, she is scared of anything displayed before her.

235. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked, "Describe to us the wise person." He (ع) said: He is the one who puts everything in its right place. He (ع) was then asked to describe the ignorant person, so he said, "I have just done so!"

Al-Radi has said, "He means to say that the ignorant person is the one who does not put things in their right places. He simply is the antithesis of the wise person.

236. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: By Allāh! Your world is cheaper in my eyes than the intestines of a pig in the hands of leper.

237. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Some people worship Allāh out of their desire (to worship Him). Such is the worship of traders. Some people worship Allah out of fear of Him; such is the worship of slaves. And some people worship Allah to thank Him; such is the worship of the free.

238. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Woman is evil, and the worst of her evil is that we cannot do without her!

239. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who obeys postponements loses track of rights. One who obeys a taleteller loses friends.

240. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A rock taken by force in the building of a house is a pawn for its destruction.

241. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The oppressed one's day (of judgment) is to the oppressor much more hard than the day of the oppressor against the oppressed.

242. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If many answers crowd together, the truth is hidden.

243. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Fear Allāh to some degree (even) though it may be little, and set a curtain between you and Allāh (even) though it may be thin.

244. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When replies are numerous, the correct point remains obscure.[254]

245. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Surely in every blessing there is a right of Allah. If one carries out that right, Allah increases the blessing, and if one falls short of doing so, one stands in danger of losing the blessing.

246. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When capability increases, desire decreases.

247. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Keep on guard against the slipping away of blessings because not everything that runs away comes back.

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[254]If replies to a question begin to be given from all sides, every reply will raise another question and thus open the door for arguing. And as the number of replies will further necessitate search for the real truth, detection of the correct reply will become more and more arduous, because everyone will try to have his reply accepted as correct as a result of which he will try to collect arguments from here and there to have his reply accepted as correct. As a result of which the whole matter will become confused and this dream will turn into an aimless one because of the multiplicity of interpretation.

248. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Generosity is more prompting to good than regard for kinship.

249. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If a person has a good idea about you, make his idea come true.

250. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The best deed is that which you have to force yourself to do.

251. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I came to know Allāh, the Glorified One, through breaking determinations, a change of intentions and the loss of courage.[255]

252. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The sourness of this world is the sweetness of the next while the sweetness of this world is the sourness of the next.

253. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Allāh has laid down iman (conviction) for purification from polytheism; salat (prayer) for purification from vanity; zakat as a means of livelihood; siyam (fasting) as a trial of the people; hajj for the honor of Islam; persuasion for good (al-amr bil-ma'ruf) for the good of the common people; dissuasion from evil (an-nahy 'anil-munkar) for controlling the mischievous; regard for kinship for increase of number; revenge for stopping bloodshed, the award of penalties for the realization of importance of the prohibitions; the abstinence from drinking wine for the protection of one's wits; the avoidance of theft for inculcating chastity; the abstinence from adultery for safeguarding lineage; the abstinence from sodomy for increasing the progeny; tendering testimony for furnishing proof against contentions; abstinence from telling lies for increasing the esteem of the truth; the maintenance of peace (salam) for the protection from danger; Imāmate

[255]The breaking of determinations and the loss of courage can be argued to prove the existence of Allah in this way that, for example, a man determines to do a thing but before the determination is transformed into action, it changes and some other idea takes its place. This alteration of ideas and determinations and the emergence of change therein is a proof that there is some higher controlling power over us which has the capacity to bring them from non-existence into existence and again from existence into non-existence, and this is beyond human power. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge a super authority which effects change and alteration in determination.

(Divine Leadership) for the orderliness of the community and obedience (to Imāms) as a mark of respect to the Imāmate.

Before describing some of the aims and good points of the commands of the Sharī`a, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has begun with the aims and objectives of conviction (iman) because iman serves as the basis of religious commands. Without it, no need is felt for any religious code or jurisprudence. Iman is acknowledging the existence of the Creator and the admission of His Oneness. When this iman takes root in the heart of a man, the latter does not agree to bow before any other being, nor is he over-awed or affected by any power or authority. Rather, getting mentally freed of all ties, he regards himself as a devotee of Allah. The result of this adherence to this Unity is that he is saved from the pollution of polytheism.

Prayer (salat) is the most important of all forms of worship. It consists of standing, sitting, bending and prostrating, and these postures are a successful way of destroying the feeling of vanity and pride, erasing self-conceit and egotism and creating humility and submissiveness. This is so because the actions and movements of a vain person produce pride and haughtiness while humble actions engender the quality of submissiveness and humbleness in the mind. With the exercise of these deeds, a man, by and by, acquires a humble temperament. This is how the Arabs, who were so vain that if their whip fell off during riding, they would not bend down to pick it up or if the strap of the shoe gave way, they thought it insulting to bend down to mend it..., began to rub their faces on the dust during prostrations in their prayers and place their foreheads in the status of others' feet during congregational prayers. This way, they acquired the true spirit of Islam after abandoning the pre-Islamic vanity and partisanship.

Zakat, namely that a person who is financially able to do so should pay annually out of his money or property a fixed share (10%) for those who are either destitute or do not have means of livelihood for a year, is an obligatory command of Islam. The purpose behind it is that no individual in the community should remain poor, and they should all remain safe from the evils that result from need and poverty. Besides, another objective is that wealth should keep rotating from one individual to another and should not be centered in a few persons.

Fasting (siyam) is a form of worship in which there is not an iota of show, and no motive is active in it except that of pure intention. As a

result, even in seclusion, when hunger perturbs a man or thirst makes him uneasy, he does not extend his hand for eating, nor does the longing for water make him lose his control although if something is eaten or drunk, none is to peep into his stomach: The purity of conscience prevents his will from deflecting. This is the greatest advantage of fasting: It engenders purity of will in action.

The purpose of hajj is that Muslims from all corners of the globe should assemble at one place so that this world assembly should prove to be an occasion for the manifestation of Islam's greatness, the renewal of the passion for worship and the creation of bonds of mutual brotherhood.

The purpose of jihad is to fight with all possible might and means those forces which oppose Islam, so that Islam may achieve stability and progress. Although there are dangers for life in this course and difficulties crop up at every step, yet the tidings for eternal ease and everlasting life produce the courage to bear all these hardships.

The persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil are effective ways of showing others the correct path and preventing them from committing wrongdoings. If a community has no persons to perform these duties, nothing can save it from ruin, and it falls to an extreme depth morally and socially. That is why Islam has laid a great emphasis on it as compared to other matters and held disregard to it as an unpardonable sin.

Doing good for kinship means that a man should do favors to his relatives. He at least should not stop mutual accosting and speaking with them so that attitudes may become clean and family ties may develop. Dispersed individuals may render strength to one another.

Seeking restitution is a right given to the survivors of the killed person. They can demand a life for a life so that, for fear of punishment, none will dare kill anyone. At the same time, the survivor's passion for revenge should not result in the killing of more than one single person. No doubt, forgiveness or pardon does carry weight in its own place but where it means trampling of an individual's right or a danger to world peace, it cannot be regarded as favorable. Rather, on such an occasion, restitution, or the payment of the blood money (diyya), becomes the sole way of stopping bloodshed and for the safety of the human life. Thus, Allāh says: "And for you, there is (security of) restitution (qisas), O men of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil)" (Quran, 2: 179).

The purpose behind the awarding of penalties is to make the offender appreciate the seriousness of violating the prohibitions of Allāh so that he may keep off the prohibitions for fear of being punished.

Wine causes diffusion of thinking, dispersion of senses and weakness of comprehension. As a result, a man commits such actions which will not be expected of him while in the state of his senses being weak. Besides, it ruins health and renders the body liable to catch infectious diseases, while sleeplessness, nervous weakness and rheumatism are its main side effects. The Sharī`a has prohibited it in view of these ill effects.

Theft, that is, taking what someone else owns, is an evil which is produced by the sway of greed and evil passions. Since bringing down evil passions from the status of excess to the bounds of moderation means chastity, the abstinence from theft by curbing greed and evil passions will produce it.

Adultery and sodomy have been prohibited in order that one's lineage may be regulated and the human race may continue and prosper, because the issues by adultery are not regarded as legitimate for the purposes of lineage. Consequently, they are not entitled to inheritance, while there is no question of issues in the case of unnatural practices. Besides, as a consequence of these evil practices, one may contract such diseases which cause ruination of life in addition to discontinuity of progeny.

The law of testimony is needed because if one party denies the right of another party, the latter may establish it through testimony and thereby safeguard it.

Abstention from lies and falsehood has been commanded so that the standing and importance of its antithesis, namely the truth, may become prominent. In observing the benefits and the advantages of the truth, the moral weakness of falsehood may be avoided.

"Salam" means peace and peace-loving, and it is obvious that a peaceful attitude is a successful way of protecting one from dangers and for the prevention of war and fighting. Generally, commentators have taken the word salam to mean "mutual greetings and well-wishing", but the context and the fact that it has been mentioned in the series of obligations does not support this interpretation. However, according to this interpretation, salam is a means of safety from dangers because it is

regarded as a way of peace and peace-loving. When two Muslims meet each other, they offer salam to one another, it means that they announce the wishes of each for the welfare of the other. Afterwards, each feels safe with the other.

Imamate (imamah): This word has appeared in the same context in the authentic editions of Nahjul-Balagha as well as in its commentaries like that of Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 19, p. 90, Ibn Maytham, Vol. 5, pp. 367-378; Minhaj al-Bara'ah, Vol. 21, p. 318, and other sources besides Nahjul-Balagha such as Nihayat al-'Arab by an-Nuwayri ash-Shafi'i, Vol. 8, p. 183 and Bihar al-Anwar by al-Majlisi, Vol. 6, p. 111.

In fact, this word, "imāmah", has been distorted to "amanah" (trust) or "amanat" (trusts) in some copies such as those printed in Egypt. It is very surprising to note that the word has appeared as amanah in the text of Nahjul-Balagha printed with a commentary by Ibn Abul-Hadid in Egypt in the first edition, Vol. 4, p. 350 as well as in the second edition edited by Muhammad Abul-Fadhl Ibrahim, Vol. 19, p. 86, while he himself (Ibn Abul-Hadid) based his commentary on its correct reading, namely imamah as did other commentators.

However, in explanation of this sentence, "Imamate for the orderliness of the community," as the theological scholars say: Whoever has known dark experiences and has examined political principles knows, out of necessity, that whenever men have among them a chief and a guide whom they obey, one who restrains the oppressor from his oppression and the unjust man from his injustice and avenges the oppressed of his oppressor, and along with that leads them to rational principles and religious duties and restrains them from the corruption which causes the destruction of order in their worldly affairs and from the evils which result in wretchedness in the world to come, so that every individual might fear that punishment..., then because of all of this, they will draw near to soundness and depart from corruption (Ch. 11, English translation, p. 63).

The institution of Imamate is intended to cater for the unification of the nation and to protect the commandments of Islam from alteration and change. In the absence of a head for the nation and a protector for the religion, the order of the nation cannot be maintained, nor can the commandments of Islam remain safe from interference by others. This objective can be achieved only when obedience to him is obligatory on the people. This is so because if he is not obeyed and followed by obligation, he will neither be able to maintain justice and equity, nor

secure the rights of the oppressed from the oppressor, nor issue and enforce the laws of the Shari`a and consequently the extinction of evil and mischief from the land cannot be expected.

254. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) used to say: If you want an oppressor to take an oath, ask him to swear like this: that he is out of Allāh's might and power, because if he swears falsely in this way, he will be swiftly punished while if he swears by Allah Who is such that there is no god but He, he will not be quickly punished since he is acknowledging the Unity of Allah, the Sublime.[256]

255. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib(ع) said: O son of Adam! Be your own representative in the matter of your property, and do about it

[256]It is narrated that someone levied some charges against Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع) before the 'Abbaside caliph 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Mansur. Al-Mansur sent for the Imam and told him that such-and-such a person had told him such-and-such about him. The Imam said it was all wrong and there was not an iota of truth in it. He desired the man to be sent for and questioned before him. Consequently, he was sent for and questioned. He said that whatever he had said was true and correct. The Imam said to him, "If you are speaking the truth, then you swear as I ask you to swear." Thereafter, the Imam (ع) made him swear by saying, "I am out of Allah's might and power and I rely on my own might and power." Soon after swearing like this, the man was attacked with paralysis and he became motionless. The Imam, returned with full honor and prestige (*Al-Kafi*, al-Kulayni, Vol. 6, pp. 445-446; *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 47, pp. 164-165, 172-175, 203-204; *Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah*, Ibn as-Sabbagh al-Maliki, pp. 225-226; *As-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*, Ibn Hajar ash-Shafi'i, p. 120; *Jami' Karamat al-Awliya'*, an-Nabhani ash-Shafi'i, Vol. 2, p. 4). Such an event took place during the reign of Harun ar-Rashid (149/766-193/809 grandson of al-Mansur) when 'Abdullah ibn Mus'ab (grandson of 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, the well-known enemy of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) of the Holy Prophet) slandered Yahya ibn 'Abdallah ibn al-Hassan ibn (al-Imam) al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib before Harun ar-Rashid by saying that he was plotting a revolution against him (Harun). Then Yahya made 'Abdullah swear before Harun in the same manner as the Imam had done. When 'Abdullah swore as he was required to, the symptom of leprosy soon appeared in him in the presence of Harun and he died after three days, while every part of his flesh cracked open and all the hair of his body fell out. After this, Harun used to say, "How soon Allah took revenge on 'Abdulln ah for Yahya!" (*Maqatil at-Talibiyyin*, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, pp. 472-478; *Muruj al-Dhahab*, al-Mas'udi, Vol. 3, pp. 340-342; Tarikh Baghdad, al-Khatib, Vol. 14, pp. 110-112; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 19, pp. 91-94; *At-Tarikh*, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 10, pp. 167-168; *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, al-Sayyuti, p. 287).

whatever you want to be done with it after your death.[257]Since after you, it will be out of your control.

256. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Anger is a kind of madness because the victim to it repents afterwards. If he does not repent his madness is confirmed.

257. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Health of body comes from paucity of envy.[258]

258. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to Kumayl ibn Ziyad an-Nakha'i: O Kumayl! Direct your people to go out in the day to achieve noble traits and to go out in the night to meet the needs of those who might be sleeping, for I swear by the One Whose hearing extends to all voices, if someone pleases another's heart, Allāh will create a special thing out of this pleasing so that whenever any hardship befalls him, it will come running like flowing water and drive away the hardship as wild camels are driven away.

259. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When you fall in destitution, trade with Allāh through charity.

260. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Faithfulness with faithless people is faithlessness with Allāh, while faithlessness with faithless people is faithfulness with Allāh.

261. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There is many a man being gradually brought towards punishment by good treatment with him; many a man who remains in deceit because his evils are covered, and many a

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[257]The meaning of it is that if a person desires that after his death a portion of his property should be spent on charity, he should not wait till the time of his death but should spend it wherever he desires even during his lifetime. It is possible that after his death, his successors may not act upon his will or he may not get an opportunity to write a will. A Persian couplet says:

Give away money and property while you are living,

[258]Envy produces such a poisonous matter in the body which destroys the natural heat of the body. As a result, the body weakens and the spirit withers. This is why an envious person never prospers and melts away in the heat of envy.

man who is in illusion because of good talk about him, while there is no greater ordeal by Allāh, the Glorified One, than the giving of time.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "This saying has appeared earlier as well but here it contains a beautiful and useful addition."

Section where we have included selections from wonderful sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) which require explanations:

262-1. A tradition related from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: When the situation is like this, then the head of the religion will rise and people will gather around him as pieces of rainless cloud gather during autumn...

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "ya`sub"[259] is the great chief who is in charge of the people's affairs, and "quza" means the pieces of cloud which have no rain.

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[259]"Ya`sub" [which exists in the original Arabic text] is the name given to the queen bee, and the saying of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib is: "fa idha kana dhalika daraba ya`subu'd-din bi dhanabihi". The word "daraba" means to beat, strike, hit, etc.; "ya`subu'd-din" means "the head of religion and of the Sharī`a", and "dhanab" means tail, end, adherent or flower. In this sentence, "ya`subu'd-din" stands for the Present Imam (Imam al-Mahdi [عج]). Although this title was given by the Holy Prophet to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) specifically, as he said, "O Ali! You are the *ya'sub* (head) of the believers while wealth is the *ya'sub* of the hypocrites" (*Al-Isti'ab*, Vol. 4, p. 1744; *Usd al-Ghabah*, Vol. 5, p. 287; *Al-Isabah*, Vol. 4, p. 171; *Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah*, Vol. 2, p. 155; *Majma' az-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 102; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 1, p. 12; Vol. 19, p. 22). Also, the Holy Prophet said to Ali: "You are the *ya'sub* of the religion" (*Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah*, Vol. 2, p. 177; *Taj al-'Arus*, Vol. 1, p. 381; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 1, p. 12; Vol. 19, p. 224). Also, the Holy Prophet said to Ali: "You are the *ya'sub* of the Muslims (*Yanabi' al-Mawaddah*, al-Qunduzi, p. 62). Again the Holy Prophet said: "You are the *ya'sub* of Quraysh" (*Al-Maqasid al-Hassanah*, as-Sakhawi, p. 94). Therefore, the reason for giving the Imam this name is that just as the queen bee is pure alone and in the society of other bees, collecting her nectar from the blossoms and flowers, keeping away from pollution, in the same way, the present Imam (عج) is free from all pollution and is perfectly clean and pure. This saying has been interpreted in several ways: Firstly, it means that "When the present Imam (عج) settles at his seat after his tour and rotation around the world, people will gather around him." Secondly, it means that "When the Imam (عج) moves about on earth along with his friends and associates..." In this case the word "daraba" will mean moving about, and the word "dhanab" will mean helpers and associates. Thirdly, it means that "when the Imam rises with a

263-2. A tradition of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: He is a versatile speaker.[260]

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Ashahshah" means one expert and free in speech, and everyone who is free in speech or in walking is called "Ashahshah", while in another sense this word means a miserly and niggardly person.

264-3. A tradition from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: Quarrels bring about ruin.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Quhm" means "ruin" because quarrels often drive men into ruin and grief. In the same way, it is said "quhmatul-A`rub" which means the period (of drought) when the cattle owned by the nomad desert Arabs are reduced to bones. Another argument is also advanced in this matter, namely that the situation drives them to green areas. In other words, the hardship of the desert life drives them to hadar (metropolis area, a more sophisticated and complex living environment than that wherein nomads of the desert live).

265-4. A tradition from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: When girls come of age, relatives on the father's side are preferable.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "Instead of 'nassa'l-hiqaq', the combination of 'nassa'l-haqa'iq' has also been related." "Nass" means the last end of things or their most remote limit, such as "an-nassi fi'ssayr" means the maximum a beast can walk. Or you say "nasastur-rajula anil-amri" when you have questioned a man to the extreme to make him utter all that he has. Thus, "nassul-haqa'iq" means prudence because it is the last limit of childhood and is the time when a child crosses childhood into maturity. This is a very eloquent reference to the point, and a strange one, too.

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sword in hand..." In this case the word "dhanab" will mean stinging by the bee. Fourthly, it means that "When the Imam rises for the propagation of the true faith with full fervor..." In this case, the sentence is suggestive of the state of anger and the posture to attack.

[260]The reference about the "versatile speaker" is to Sa'sa'ah ibn Suhan al-'Abdi who was among the chief companions of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). This saying throws light on the greatness of his speaking ability and the force of his utterances. In this regard, Ibn Abul-Hadid has written the following: "It suffices Sa'sa'ah's greatness that a personality like Ali (ع) has praised him for versatility and eloquence of speech" (*Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 19, p. 106).

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) intends to say: "When girls reach this stage, their relatives on the father's side have a better right [to marry them] than their mother, provided they are those with whom marriage is not prohibited, such as brothers and uncles, etc., to arrange for their marriages if they so desire. "Al-hiqaq" also means the quarreling of the mother with a girl's paternal relatives. This quarrel is that everyone of them says he has a better right for her. That is why it is said "haqatuhu hiqaqan" on the lines of "jadaltuhu jidalan". It has also been said that "nassul-hiqaq" means acquiring understanding. This is prudence, too, because Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to the stage when rights and duties become applicable. The person who has related the word as "haqa'iq" intends to signify the plural of "haqiqah" (reality, fact, truth).

The above is what Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam has stated (in Gharib al-Hadith, Vol. 3, pp. 456-458); but I think that what is meant here by the word "nassul-hiqaq" is a girl's reaching the stage when it is possible to marry her and allow her to dispose of her rights herself on the analogy of "bil hiqaqi mina'l-ibili" (a camel's attaining majority) wherein "hiqaq" is the plural of "hiqqah" or "hiqq"; it means completion of three years and entry into the fourth, which is the time when it reaches the age when it is possible to ride on its back. "Haqa'iq", too, is the plural of "hiqqah". Thus, both the versions point to the same meaning, and this interpretation is more in keeping with the way of the Arabs than the other one stated earlier.

266-5. A tradition of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: Faith produces a "Alumazah" in the heart. As faith develops, "Alumazah" also increases.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Alumazah" is a white spot, or something like that. On that analogy, if a horse has a white spot on its lower lip, it is called "farusun al-mazu", that is, a white-spotted horse.

267-6. A tradition of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: If a man has "ad-daynu'z-zanun" (i.e. doubtful loan), it is his duty to pay zakat thereon for all the past years when he recovers it.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Az-zanun" is the loan about which the lender does not know whether he will be able to recover it from the borrower or not. He is like the one who hopes as well as loses hope. This is the most eloquent way of expression. In this way, everything about which you do not know where you stand will be zanun. In the same strain,

the poet al-Aisha (Maymun ibn Qays al-Wa'ili [d. 7/629]) says, "The az-zanun well (i.e. the one that may or may not have water), which is also deprived of the rain of the clouds and cannot be compared to the Euphrates whose waves are rising high and which ever pushes the boat away on its current as it does the adept swimmer."

"Jubb" means " well" (located in a wilderness), while zanun is that about which it is not known whether or not it has water.

268-7. A tradition of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) relates that he arranged a force for advancing for jihad and said: i'dhibu (turn away) from women as far as you can.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: It ("i'dhibu") means "stay away" from thoughts of women and from clinging your heart to them, and do not have union with them, because all this produces weakness in enthusiasm, affects the firmness of determination, weakens one against his enemy and prevents one from excelling in fighting. Anything which prevents from something is called "adhaba 'anhu" i.e. turned away from it. Thus, "al-'adhib" and "al-adhub" mean one who gives up eating and drinking.

269-8. A tradition of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) says: ... Like the successful shooter (al-yasir al-falij) who looks forward to achieving success at his first shot.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Al-yasirun" (pl. of al-yasir) means those who shoot with arrows on the slaughtered camel by way of gambling, while "al-falij" means successful or victorious. For example, it is said: "falaja `alayhim" or "falajahum" (that is, he got victory over them or overpowered them). A poet has said by way of war this recital: "When I noticed a successful person securing victory..., etc."

270-9. A tradition of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) runs as follows: When the crisis became red-hot, we sought refuge with the Messenger of Allah (ص), and none of us was closer to the enemy than he himself was.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "This means that when fear of the enemy increased and fighting became serious, the Muslims begin to think that since the Messenger of Allah had taken up fighting himself, Allah must give them victory through him and that, therefore, they will be safe from all the dangers because of his presence."

And the words "idha'hmarra'l-ba'su" (when the crisis became red-hot) refers to the seriousness of the matter. For this purpose, several expressions have been used out of which this is the best, since Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has likened war with fire which combines heat and redness both in action as well as in color. This is confirmed by the words of the Messenger of Allah (ص) when during the battle of Hunayn, he noticed the people of Hawāzin (tribe) fighting, he said: "Now the watis has heated up" and watis is the place where fire is lighted. In this way, the Messenger of Allah (ص) likened the seriousness of fighting by men to the seriousness of the fire and its flames.

This section ends and we return to the original theme of the chapter.

271. When the news of the attack of Mu`awiyah's men on al-Anbar reached Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he himself came out walking till he reached an-Nukhaylah where people overtook him and said: "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib! We are [mighty] enough for [defeating] them." He said: You cannot be enough for me against yourselves, so how can you be enough for me against others? Before me, the people used to complain of the oppression of their rulers, but now I have to complain of the wrongful actions of my people; as though I am led by them and they are the leaders, or that I am the subject and they are the rulers.

The narrator says: "When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered this during his long speech, which we have included in the collection of sermons (No. 27), two men from among his companions advanced towards him and one of them said: "'I rule none except myself and my brother' (Quran, 5: 25). So, order us with your command, O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib and we will carry it out." Thereupon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "How can you two accomplish what I aim at?"

272. It is said that al-Harith ibn Hawt came to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib and said: "Do you believe that I can ever imagine that the people of Jamal were wrong?" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "O al-Harith! You have seen below yourself but not above yourself, so you have been confused. Certainly, you have known right, so that you can recognize the righteous. And you have not known wrong, so that you can recognize the people who are wrong!" Then al-Harith said: "In that case, I shall

withdraw along with Sa‘d ibn Malik[261] and ‘Abdullah ibn Umar,” whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: “Verily, Sa‘d and `Umar have neither sided with right nor forsaken wrong.”[1]

273. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who holds authority is like one who rides a lion; he is envied for his status but he well knows it.[262]

274. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do good with the bereaved ones of others so that good is done to your bereaved ones, too.

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[261]Sa‘d ibn Malik (i.e. Sa‘d ibn Abu Waqqas, father of `Umar ibn Sa‘d who killed Imam Hussain [ع]) and Abdullah ibn `Umar were among those who were keeping themselves away from Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib’s help and support. As for Sa‘d ibn Abu Waqqas, after the killing of Othman he retired to some wilderness and passed his life there, but did not agree to swear the oath of allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) (as caliph). But after the death of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib he used to express his repentance, saying, “I held an opinion but it was a wrong opinion.” (*Al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim, Vol. 3, p. 116). And when Mu`awiyah blamed him for not supporting him in his fight with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib, Sa‘d said: I only repent for not having fought against the rebellious group (i.e. Mu`awiyah and his folks). (*Ahkam al-Quran*, al-Jassas al-Hanafi, Vol. 2, pp. 224, 225; *Al-Furu‘*, Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali, Vol. 3, p. 542). As for ‘Abdullah ibn Umar, although he had sworn allegiance, he refused to help Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in his battles putting forth this excuse: “I have sought seclusion to devote myself to worship and do not, therefore, want to involve myself in war and fighting.” A Persian couplet says that intelligence regards such excuses to be worse than the offence itself. “Abdullah ibn `Umar also frequently used to express his repentance, even up to the last moments of his life, saying: I do not find anything in myself to be distressed about in this world, except my not having fought alongside Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) against the rebellious group as Allah, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, had commanded me (*Al-Mustadrak*, Vol. 3, pp. 115-116; *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, al-Bayhaqi, Vol. 8, p. 172; *Al-Tabaqat*, Ibn Sa‘d, Vol. 4, part 1, pp. 136, 137; *Al-Isti`ab*, Vol. 3, p. 953; *Usd al-Ghabah*, Vol. 3, p. 229; Vol. 4, p. 33; *Majma‘ az-Zawa’id*, Vol. 3, p. 182; Vol. 7, p. 242; *Al-Furu‘*, Vol. 3, p. 543; *Ruh al-Ma‘ani*, al-Alusi, Vol. 26, p. 151).

[262]The notion here is that if a person holds a high position in, say, a royal court, people look at his rank, status, honor and prestige with envy. But he himself has always the fear lest the royal pleasure should turn against him and he falls in the pit of disgrace and dishonor or death and destruction. He is like the rider on a lion with whom people are awed, but he himself ever faces the danger lest the lion should devour him or throw him in some fatal pit.

275. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When the utterance of the wise is to the point, it serves as a cure, but if it is wrong, it acts like an illness.[263]

276. Someone asked Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to define religion for him. The Imam said, "Come to me tomorrow so that I may enlighten you in the presence of all people; thus, if you forget what I say, others might retain it. This is so because an utterance is like a fluttering prey which may be grappled by someone but missed by others."

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "We have already stated in the earlier chapter how Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib replied to this man, namely his saying (No. 31): 'Faith stands on four pillars, etc.'"

277. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O son of Adam! Do not inflict the worry of the day that has not yet come on the day which has already come because if that day is in your life, Allah will also bestow its livelihood.

278. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Have love for your friend up to a limit, for it is possible that he may turn into your enemy some day. And hate your enemy up to a limit, for it is possible that he may turn into your friend some day.

279. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There are two kinds of workers in the world. One is a person who works in this world for this world and his work for this world keeps him unmindful of the next. He is afraid of destitution for those whom he will leave behind but feels safe about it. So, he spends his life seeking the good of others. The other is one who works in this world for what is to come hereafter, and he secures his share of this world without an effort. Thus, he gets both the benefits and becomes the owner of both homes. In this way, he is prestigious before Allah. If he asks Allah anything, He does not deny him.

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[263]The learned and the reformers are responsible for improvement as well as deterioration because the common people are under their influence; they regard their words and actions as correct and sound. They rely on them and act upon their words. Thus, if their teaching caters for improvement, then thousands of individuals will acquire improvement and betterment thereby. But if there is evil in it, thousands of individuals will get involved in misguidance and straying. That is why it is said: "When a scholar gets into evil, the whole world gets into evil."

280. It is related that during the days of (caliph) Umar ibn al-Khattab, the question of the excess of the ornaments of the Ka‘bah was mentioned to him and some people suggested the following: “If you raise by it an army of Muslims, it will be a matter of great reward, and what will the Ka‘bah do with the ornaments?” Umar thought of doing so but asked Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) what he thought. The Imam said: When the Quran was revealed to the Prophet (ص), there were four kinds of property: One, the property of a Muslim which he distributed among the successors according to fixed shares. Second, the tax (fay’) which he distributed to those for whom it was meant. Third, the one-fifth (khums) for which Allah had fixed the ways of disposal. Fourth, the amounts of charity (sadaqat) the disposal of which was also fixed by Allah. The ornaments of the Ka‘bah did exist in those days, but Allah left them as they were. He did not leave them by omission, nor were they unknown to Him. Therefore, you should keep them where Allah and His Prophet placed them.

Thereupon, Umar ibn al-Khattab said, “If you had not been here, we would have been humiliated.” He left the ornaments as they were.[1]
Among the first three caliphs, `Umar ibn al-Khattab often used to call upon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to help him solve many intricate problems, so as to benefit from his vast knowledge. But Abu Bakr, due to the short period of his caliphate, as well as Othman, due to the special circumstances of the latter’s caliphate and entourage, seldom used to call upon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and benefit from his advice. Umar used to praise Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) very much for his vast knowledge, saying, “The most knowledgeable person among us in jurisprudence and judgement is Ali” (Sahih, al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p. 23; Al-Musnad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 5, p. 113; Al-Mustadrak, al-Hakim, Vol. 3, p. 305; At-Tabaqat, Ibn Sa‘d, Vol. 2, part 2, p. 102; Al-Isti‘ab, Vol. 3, p. 1102).

Certainly, there is no need for a testimony from Umar or from others in this regard. Umar himself and a group of the companions confess that the Holy Prophet used to say, “Ali is the most knowledgeable in jurisprudence and judgement among my ummah (Muslim community)” (Akhbar al-Qudat, Waki‘, Vol. 1, p. 78; Masabih as-Sunnah, al-Baghawi, Vol. 2, p. 203; Al-Isti‘ab, Vol. 1, pp. 16-17; Vol. 3, p. 1102; Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 2, p. 108; Al-Sunan, Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, p. 55).

In this regard, Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrates from Abu Hazm that a certain man approached Mu`awiyah and put to him some theological

questions. Mu‘awiyah said, “Refer these questions to Ali who possesses better knowledge.” The man said, “But I rather have your own reply than that of Ali.” Mu’āwiyah silenced him and said, “This is the worst thing that I have ever heard from you! You have expressed hatred towards the person whom the Messenger of Allah used to coach and tutor as a mother bird feeds a nestling by putting grain after grain into the mouth of the nestling with its beak and to whom the Messenger of Allah said: ‘You hold the same status in relation to me as Harun held in relation to Musa except that there shall, in all certainty, be no prophet after me’, and to whom Umar used to turn for the solution of unsolved problems” (Fayd al-Qadir, al-Munawi, Vol. 3, p. 46; Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 2, p. 195; As-Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah, p. 107; Fath al-Bari, Vol. 17, p. 105).

Also, Umar used to say the following quite frequently: “Women lack the ability to give birth to the like of Ali ibn Abu Talib. Had it not been for Ali, Umar would have perished” (Ta’wil Mukhtalaf al-Hadith, Ibn Qutaybah, p. 202; Al-Isti‘ab, Vol. 3, p. 1103; Qudat al-Andalus, al-Maliqi, p. 73; Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 2, p. 194; Al-Manaqib, al-Khawarizmi, p. 39; Yanabi‘ al-Mawaddah, p. 75, 373; Fayd al-Qadir, Vol. 4, p. 356).

He also used to say, “I seek the protection of Allah from the problems for the solution of which Abul-Hassan (Ali) is not present!” (Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, pp. 1102-1103; At-Tabaqat, Vol. 2, part 2, p. 102; Sifatus-Safwah, Ibn al-Jawzi, Vol. 1, p. 121; Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 4, pp. 22-23; Al-Asabah, Vol. 2, p. 509; At-Tarikh, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, p. 360).

Umar used to often address Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) thus: “O Abul-Hassan! I seek the protection of Allah from being in a community among which you are not found” (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 1, pp. 457-458; At-Tafsir, Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi, Vol. 32, p.10; Ad-Durr al-Manthur; al-Sayyuti, Vol. 3, p. 144; Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 2, p. 197; Fayd al-Qadir, Vol. 3, p. 46; Vol. 4, p. 356; As-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqah, p. 107).

Above all, this confession is the acknowledgment by the Holy Prophet of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab himself, Abū Sa’id al-Khudri and Mu`ath ibn Jabal that the Holy Prophet said: “O Ali! I have exceeded you in Prophethood, for there will be no prophet after me, and you exceed others in seven noble qualities. You are: i) the first [among all contemporary males] to believe in Allah, ii) the best fulfiller of the promise made to Allah, iii) the best adherer to the commandments of Allah, iv) the most equitable distributor among the

people, v) the best dispenser of justice (or the most clement) to the (Muslim) subjects, vi) the one who has the best insight into controversial issues (or the most learned in judgement), and vii) the most conspicuous in virtue and honor before Allah" (Hilyat al-Awliya', Vol. 1, pp. 65, 66; Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 2, p. 198; Al-Manaqib, al-Khawarizmi, p. 61; Kanz al-'Ummal, Vol. 12, p. 214; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 13, p. 230).

It is also narrated by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Ma`qil ibn Yasir and Buraydah ibn Husayb that the Messenger of Allah (ص) said to Fatima (ع), "Are you not satisfied that surely I have married you to the foremost of my ummah in believing in Islam, the most knowledgeable among them and the superior among them in clemency?" (Al-Musnad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 5, p. 26; Al-Musannaf, as-San'ani, Vol. 5, p. 490; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1099; Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 5, p. 520; Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 12, p. 205; Vol. 15, p. 99; Majma' az-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, pp. 101, 114; As-Sirah al-Halabiyyah, Vol. 1, p. 285).

Once we read the following saying by the Holy Prophet (ص), we will no longer be surprised when taking note, based on the above acknowledgments, of the vast knowledge of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib, his efficiency in the field of jurisprudence and judgement: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; whoever wants to acquire (my) knowledge must come through the gate. (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 126, 127; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1102; Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 4, p. 22; Tahthib at-Tahthib, Vol. 6, pp. 320-321; Vol. 7, p. 337; Majma' az-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, p. 114; Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 12, pp. 201, 212; Vol. 15, pp. 129-130).

Also, the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "I am the store-house of wisdom and Ali is its gate. Whoever wants to acquire wisdom must come through the gate" (Al-Jami' as-Sahih, at-Tirmidhi, Vol. 5, pp. 637-638; Hilyat al-Awliya', Vol. 1, p. 64; Masabih as-Sunnah, al-Baghawi, Vol. 2, p. 275; Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 12, p. 193; Kanz al-'Ummal, Vol. 12, p. 201).

281. It is related that two persons were brought to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) once. They had stolen a public property. One of them was a slave purchased with public money and the other had been purchased by someone from among the people. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said, "As for this one who has stolen the public property, there is no punishment for him, for it means one who is the property of Allah has taken another property of Allah. As for the other, he should be punished." Consequently, the thief's hand was cut off.

282. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If my steps acquire firmness out of these slippery places, I will alter several things.[264]

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), who was the greatest scholar of the Shari`a, used to protest against these orders and had his own views about the companions. In this regard, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following: "There is no possibility for us to deny that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib had views on the commands of the Shari`a and opinions at odds with those of the companions" (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 19, p. 161).

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) assumed charge of the formal caliphate, rebellions soon cropped up on all sides and he did not get rid of these troubles up to the last moment. Consequently, the altered commands could not be fully corrected, and many wrong or doubtful commands gained currency in areas far removed from the center. Nevertheless, the group of people who were associated with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) used to inquire about the commands of the Shari`a from him and recorded them. As a result, the correct commands did not disappear and the wrong ones did not become unanimously accepted, thanks to Allah.

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[264]It cannot be denied that after the Prophet of Islam (ص), changes came into existence in the Islamic faith when some people, acting upon their own imagination or inclination, amended or altered the commands of the Shari`a, although none has the right to make alteration in it. This will be ignoring the clear commands of the Quran and the Sunnah and enforcing commands produced by one's own imagination, way of thinking or inclination. Thus, the Quran contains this clear method of divorce: that "(revokable) divorce (i.e. divorce in which resumption of conjugal relations is permissible without a marriage to another man taking place) may be done with two pronouncements" (Quran, 2: 229). But in view of certain supposed advantages, caliph `Umar ordered three pronouncements to be required on a single occasion. Similarly, he introduced the system of *'awl* in inheritance and introduced four *takbirs* in the funeral prayer. In the same way, caliph Othman added an *adhan* to the Friday prayer service, ordering the offering of full prayers in place of *qasr* (shortened) ones, and allowed the sermon to precede the 'Id prayer service. In fact, hundreds of commands of this type were altered or fabricated. As a result, even correct commands got mixed with wrong ones and lost their authenticity. (For such changes to the creed made, see: *Al-Ghadir*, *Al-Amani* [by Abu Bakr], Vol. 7, pp. 74-236; [by Umar], Vol. 6, pp. 83-325; [by Othman], Vol. 8, pp. 98-387; *An-Nass wal-Ijtihad*, Sharafu'd-Din [by Abu Bakr], pp. 76-154; [by Umar], pp. 155-276; [by Othman], pp. 284-289. See also *Muqaddimat Mir'atul-Uqul*, al-'Askari, Vol. 1 & 2).

283. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Know with full conviction that Allāh has not fixed for any person more livelihood than what has been ordained in the Book of Destiny, even though his means (of seeking it) may be great, his craving for it intense and his efforts for it acute. Nor does the weakness of a person or the paucity of his means stand in the way between what is ordained in the Book of Destiny and himself. Whoever realizes it and acts upon it is the best of them all in comfort and benefit, while whoever disregards it and doubts it exceeds all men in disadvantages. Very often, a favored person is being slowly driven (towards punishment) through those favors, and very often an afflicted person is being done good through his own affliction. Therefore, O listener, increase your gratefulness, lessen your haste and stay within the bounds of your livelihood.

284. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not turn your knowledge into ignorance or your conviction into doubt. When you gain knowledge act (upon it), and when you acquire conviction, proceed (on its basis).[265]

285. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Greed takes a person to the watering place but brings him back without letting him drink. It undertakes responsibility but does not fulfil it. Often, the drinker gets choked before he quenches his thirst. The greater the worth of a thing yearned for, the greater is the grief for its loss. Desires blind the eyes of understanding. The destined share will reach him who does not approach it.

286. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O Allāh! I seek Your protection from this: that I may appear to be good in the eyes of the people while my inward self may be sinful before You, and that I may guard myself (from sinning) only for show before the people although

[265]Knowledge and conviction demand that they should be acted upon. If they are not acted upon, they cannot be called knowledge and conviction. Consequently, if a man says he knows the dangers that exist on particular path but he adopts that very path for his journey instead of the path that has no dangers, then who can say that this man had full certainty about the dangers of that path? This is so because the consequence of such certainty should have been that he would have avoided going on that path. Similarly, the person who has a firm belief (i.e. conviction, *iman*) in the resurrection and revival of life, or in chastisement and reward, cannot be overpowered by those things of this world that make a man neglectful to the extent that he disregards the next life, nor can he fall short in good actions for fear of chastisement and evil consequences.

You are aware of everything about me. Thus, I appear before the people in good shape although my evil acts are placed before You. This means achieving nearness to Your creatures but remoteness from Your pleasure.

287. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I swear by the One Who let us pass the dark night after which there was a bright day that such and such[266] did not happen.

288. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A small action which is continued with regularity is more beneficial than a long one performed with grudge.

289. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When optional issues stand in the way of obligatory ones, abandon them.

290. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever keeps in view the distance of the journey remains prepared.

291. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Perception by the eyes is not real observation because the eyes sometimes deceive people; but wisdom does not deceive whomsoever it counsels.

292. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Between you and preaching there is a curtain of deception.

293. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The ignorant among you get too much while the learned are just put off.

294. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Knowledge dispels the excuse of those who advance excuses.

295. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Anyone whom death overtakes early seeks time while the death of anyone who is deferred puts forth excuses for the postponement (of doing good deeds).

296. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: For every thing to which people say “how good!” there is an evil hidden in this world.

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[266]Sayyid ar-Radi has not written what it was that did not happen, leaving us only with the first part of the sentence!

297. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked about destitution. He said the following: It is a dark path; do not tread upon it. It is a deep ocean; do not dive in it. And it is the secret of Allah; do not take trouble about (knowing) it.

298. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When Allāh intends to humiliate a person, He denies him knowledge.

299. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: In the past, I had a brother-in-faith[267], and he was prestigious in my view because the world was humble in his eyes, the needs of the stomach did not have a sway over him. He did not long for what he did not get. If he got a thing, he would not ask for more. He remained most of the time silent. When he spoke, he silenced the other speakers. He quenched the thirst of inquirers. He was weak and feeble, but at the time of fighting, he was like the lion of the forest or the serpent of the valley: he would not put forth an argument unless it was decisive.

He will not abuse anyone in an excusable matter unless he had heard the excuse. He would not speak of any trouble except after its disappearance. He said what he would do and would not say what he will not. Even if he could be exceeded in speech, he could not be excelled in silence. He was more eager for keeping quiet than speaking, and if two things confronted him, he would see which was more akin to the longing of the heart and he would oppose it.

These qualities are incumbent upon you. So, you should acquire them and compete with each other in upholding them. Even if you cannot acquire them, you should know that acquiring a part is better than giving up the whole.

300. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Even if Allāh had not warned of chastisement on those who are disobedient to Him, it will be

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[267]The man whom Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) refers to here as his "brother" and whose qualities he has stated has been taken by some commentators to be Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, by some as Othman ibn Maz'un al-Jamhi, and by some as al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi. But it is not unlikely that no particular individual is referred to here at all because it is customary with Arabs to speak of a "brother" or a "comrade" although they have no particular individual in mind.

obligatory by way of gratitude for His favors that He should not be disobeyed.

301. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to express his condolences to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays about (the death of) his son: O Ash'ath! If you grieve over your son, certainly it is the consequence of the blood relationship; but if you endure, then Allāh provides recompense for every affliction. O Ash'ath! If you endure even then, matters will move on as ordained by Allah. But in that case, you will deserve to be rewarded, while if you lose patience, matters will again move as ordained by Allāh. But in this case, you will be bearing the burden (of your sins). O Ash'ath! Your son (when he lived) gave you happiness while, at the same time, he was a trial and a hardship and (when he died) he caused you to grieve while, at the same time, he has proved to be a source of reward and mercy for you.

302. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following at the grave of the Messenger of Allah (ص) at the time of his burial: Certainly endurance is good except about you. Fretting is bad except over you. And the affliction about you is great while every other affliction before or after it is small.

303. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not associate with a fool because he will beautify his actions before you and wish that you, too, be like him.[268]

304. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked about the distance between the East and the West when he replied as follows: A day's trip for the sun.

[268]A fool considers his ways of action to be most appropriate, and he wants his friend also to adopt the same ways, so that he should become as he himself is. This does not mean that he desires that his friend should become as foolish as he is. He cannot be thinking like this because he does not consider himself to be foolish. If he, in fact, considers himself to be foolish, then he will not have been as such! Rather, he considers his ways of action as correct and desires his friend to be equally "wise". That is why he presents his view before him in an embellished form and desires him to act upon it. It is possible that his friend may be influenced by his advice and tread on the same path. Therefore, it is better to keep away from him.

305. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Your friends are three and your enemies are (also) three. Your friends are: your friend, your friend's friend and your enemy's enemy. And your enemies are: your enemy, your friend's enemy and your enemy's friend.

306. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saw a man busy against his enemy with what was harmful to his own self as well, so he said: You are like one who pierces a spear through himself in order to kill the person sitting behind him.

307. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: How many are the objectives of lessons, but how few are those who take lessons![269]

308. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever goes too far in quarreling is a sinner, but if one falls short in it, one is oppressed, and it is difficult for a quarreling person to fear Allah.

309. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I am not worried about a fault after which I get time to offer prayers in two units (rek'as) and beg safety from the wrath of Allāh.

310. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked once: "How will Allah conduct the accounting of all persons despite their large number?" He replied: "Just as He provides them livelihood despite their large number." Then it was said to Him: "How will He conduct their accounting without their seeing Him?" He replied: "Just as He provides them with livelihood although they do not see Him."

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[269]If the vicissitudes and changes of this world are observed, the circumstances and conditions of the people attended to and their histories noted, then from every corner edifying stories can be heard which are fully capable of arousing the mind out of its forgetful slumber or providing instruction and imparting teaching and clear mindedness. Thus, the creation and dissolution of everything in this world, the blossoming of flowers and their withering, the thriving of vegetation and its withering away and the subjugation of every atom to change are such instructive lessons that they are enough to curb any hope of attaining eternity in this deceitful life as long as the eyes and ears are not closed to these instructive events.

A Persian couplet says:

The world is full of stories of folk gone by,
But unless one lends an ear to it, its call is feeble.

311. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Your messenger is the interpreter of your intelligence while your letter is more eloquent in expressing your true self.

312. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sāid: The person who is afflicted with hardship is not in a greater need for praying than the one who has been spared affliction but is not immune to it.

313. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: People are the progeny of the world and none can be blamed for loving the mother.

314. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The destitute person is a messenger of Allah. Whoever denies him denies Allah, and whoever gives him gives Allah.

315. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A self-respecting man never commits adultery.

316. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The fixed limit of life is enough to remain watchful.[270]

317. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A man can sleep over the death of his child but cannot sleep over the loss of his property.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "This statement means that a man remains patient about the death of his children but does not do so at the loss of his property."

318. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Mutual affection between fathers creates a relationship between the sons. Relationship is more in need of affection than affection is for a relationship.

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[270]The idea here is that lighting may flash a hundred thousand times, tempests may rise, earth may quake and mountains may collide with each other. But as long as the fixed period of life has yet to run its course, no occurrence can cause any harm, nor the typhoon of death may put out the flame of life. There is a fixed hour for death, and nothing can cut it short before that time. Thus, death itself is the watchman and guardian of life. A poet has said, "What is known as death is the watchman of life."

319. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Be afraid of the thoughts of believers because Allah, the most Exalted One, has placed the truth on their tongues.

320. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The belief of a person cannot be regarded as true unless his trust in what is with Allāh is more than his trust in what he himself has.

321. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) came to Basra, he sent Anas ibn Malik to Talhah and az-Zubayr to make them recall what he (Anas) himself had heard the Messenger of Allah (ص) saying concerning them both, but he avoided doing so. When he came back to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he said that he had forgotten that matter. Thereupon, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "If you are speaking a lie, Allah will afflict you with white spots (leucoderm) which even the turban may not cover."

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "White spot means leucoderma. After sometime this disease did occur to Anas's face, so much so that he was never seen with his face uncovered."[271]

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[271]The occasion and circumstances surrounding this statement, as related by Sayyid ar-Radi, were as follows: During the Battle of Jamal (Camel), Imam Ali ibn AbuTalib (ع) sent Anas ibn Malik to Talhah and az-Zubayr so that he should remind them of the Prophet's statement to the following effect: "You both will fight Ali and will commit excess in his regard." Anas ibn Malik went back stating that he had forgotten to mention it. Then, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered these words about him. However, it is said that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) made this statement when he wanted Anas to confim the Prophet's saying: "Whoever accepts me as his master, Ali is his master. O Allah! Love whoever loves Ali and hate whoever hates Ali." Consequently, numerous persons have testified to this *hadith*, but Anas kept quiet [and did not narrate it]... Then, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him, "You, too, were present at Ghadir Khumm. What is keeping you silent on this occasion?" Anas said, "I have grown old and my memory does not serve me well." Then, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) made this statement (see *Ansab al-Ashraf*, al-Baladhiri, concerning the biography of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), pp. 156-157; *Al-A`laq an-Nafisah*, Ibn Rustah, p. 221; *Lata'if al-Ma'arif*, ath-Tha`alibi, pp. 105-106; *Muhadarat al-Udaba'*, *Ar-Raghib*, Vol. 3, p. 293; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 4, p. 74; *Arjah al-Matalib*, Shaikh `Ubaydullah al-Hanafi, pp. 578, 579, 580). In this regard, Ibn Qutaybah (Abdullah ibn Muslim ad-Dinawari [231/828-276/889] writes the following: "People have related that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) asked Anas ibn Malik about the Prophet's saying: 'O Allah! Love whoever loves

322. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Sometimes the hearts advance [towards their Creator] and sometimes they retreat. When they advance, get them to perform the optional [acts of worship] (as well). But when they retreat, keep them confined to only what is obligatory.

323. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The Quran contains news about the past, foretelling about the future and commandments for the present.

324. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Throw a stone in return from where one comes to you because evil can be met only with evil.

325. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to his secretary 'Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi': Put cotton flake in the ink pot, keep the nib of your pen long, leave some space between the lines and close up the letters because this is good for the beauty of the writing.

326. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: I am the ya'sūb (leader) of the believers, while wealth is the leader of the wicked.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "It means that the believers follow me while the wicked follow the path that take them to wealth and riches just as the bees follow their 'ya`sub', their leader."[272]

Ali and hate whoever hates Ali,' and he replied, 'If you are a liar, may Allah afflict you with white spots which even the turban may not cover'" (*Al-Ma`arif*, p. 580). Ibn Abul-Hadid has also supported this view. Denying his knowledge of the incident mentioned by Sayyid ar-Radi, he writes the following: "The incident mentioned by Sayyid ar-Radi that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) sent Anas ibn Malik to Talhah and az-Zubayr is an unrecorded event. If Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had sent him particularly to remind them of the Prophet's saying concerning them, then he could hardly have come back and said that he had forgotten it because when he left Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and went to these two persons, he should have admitted and remembered the saying, and, therefore, how could he, on his return after an hour or a day, plead that he had forgotten it and deny it? This is something that cannot happen" (*Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 19, pp. 217-218).

[272]We have already explained the meaning of the word "ya`sub" in the footnote of saying No. 262-1 and pointed out that this title was given to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) by the Holy Prophet himself. We quoted some of his different statements on this subject. Here we quote one of the traditions in which this word appears. It is narrated by Abu Layla al-Ghifari, Abu Dharr, Salman,

327. Some Jews said to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): "You did not bury your Prophet when you picked up differences about him." It is then that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied thus: "We did not differ about him; we differed after him (i.e. about his succession). You had not dried up your feet yet, having come out of the river, when you began asking your Prophet: 'Make you for us a god as they have gods of their own.' Said he; 'Verily you are a people behaving ignorantly' (Quran, 7: 138)."[273]

328. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked: "With what did you overpower your adversaries?" He answered:

"Whenever I confronted one of them, he helped me against himself."

Ibn Abbas and Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman. It states that the Holy Prophet used to say: "Soon after my death, there will be discord. When it occurs, uphold Ali ibn Abu Talib since he will be the first person to see me and the first to shake hands with me on the Day of Judgement. He is the greatest man of the truth (*as-siddiq al-akbar*), and he is the one who discriminates between right and wrong (*faruq*) from among this *ummah*, and he is the *ya'sub* (leader) of the believers while wealth is the *ya'sub* of the hypocrites. (In addition to the references given in the above-mentioned footnote, see also *Fayd al-Qadir*, Vol. 4, p. 358; *Kanz al-Ummal*, Vol. 12, p. 214; *Muntakhab al-Kanz*, Vol. 5, p. 33; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 13, p. 228; *Tarikh*, Ibn 'Asakir (where the biography of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع] is discussed), Vol. 1, pp. 74-78; *As-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, Vol. 1, p. 380; *Thakha'ir al-'Uqba*, p. 56; *Yanabi' al-Mawaddah*, p. 62, 82, 201 and 251).

[273]The purpose behind this criticism by the Jews was to show that the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (ص) was a controversial matter. But Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) clarified the fact that the exact focus of controversy was not about his Prophethood but about his succession and vicegerency. Then, commenting on the status of the Jews, he pointed out that those who were today criticizing the mutual differences among Muslims after the Prophet were of the same kind as those who had begun to waver about belief in the Unity of Allah even during the lifetime of Moses (ع). Thus, when, on becoming free of the slavery of the Egyptians they reached the other side of the river and saw the figure of a calf in a temple in the Sinai desert, they asked Moses to get a similar figure for them, whereupon Moses rebuked them for being still as stubborn as they were in Egypt. This meant that people who were so immersed in their desire for idol-worship that even after being initiated into the belief in the Unity of Allah, they still became restless on seeing an idol and made the request for a similar idol to be made for themselves. Such people had no right to criticize any differences among the Muslims.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is pointing out his striking of awe in the hearts."[274]

329. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah: "O my son! I fear lest destitution overtakes you. So, you should seek Allah's protection from it because destitution is [an indication of] a deficiency in religious beliefs, perplexity of intelligence, and it is conducive to hatred of obstinate people."

330. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied to a man who had asked him a difficult question with the following: Ask me for understanding but do not ask for confusion because the ignorant person who tries to learn is like the learned man, but the learned man who tries to create confusion is like the ignorant.

331. Abdullah ibn Abbas once advised Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) against his views, so the Imam (ع) said: You have only to advise me, but then I have to see (what to do), and if I act against your advice, you have to follow me.[275]

352. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) returned to Kufa from Siffin, he passed by the residences of the Shibamites (who belonged to the tribe of Shibam) and heard their women mourning those killed in Siffin. At that time, a Shibamite, namely Harb ibn Shurahbil ash-Shibami, who was one of the nobles of those people, went to him. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)

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[274]The man who is over-awed by his adversary is sure to be defeated because in facing a foe, physical prowess is not enough but steadfastness of heart and strength of courage are also necessary. When the adversary loses courage and feels sure that he will be defeated, he will certainly then be defeated. This is what happened to the adversary of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع); he was so affected by his acknowledged reputation that he was sure of his own death, in consequence of which his spiritual power and self-confidence came to an end and eventually this mental state dragged him to his own death.

[275]'Abdullah ibn al-Abbas had advised Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to issue a letter of appointment to Talhah and az-Zubayr as the Governors of Kufa and to retain Mu'awiyah as the Governor of Syria till such time as his status became stabilized and the government gained strength. In reply, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said that he could not expose his own religion to danger for the sake of the worldly benefit of others, adding that "Instead of insisting on your own point of view, you should listen to me and obey me."

said to him, “Do your women have control over you as regarding the weeping that I hear? Do you not refrain them from such crying?” Harb began to walk with him while Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was on horseback, so Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to him: “Get back because the walking of a man like you with one like me is mischief for the ruler and a disgrace for the believer.”

333. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) passed by the dead bodies of the Kharijites on the day of the battle of Nahrawan and said: “Woe unto you! You have been harmed by him who deceived you.” He was asked: “O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! Who deceived them?” He replied: “Satan, the deceiver, and the inner self [nafs] that leads one to evil deceived them through passions. It made it easy for them to get into sins, promised them victory and eventually threw them into the Fire.”

334. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Beware of disobeying Allāh in solitude because the Witness (of that situation) is also the Judge.

335. When the news of the killing of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr reached Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he said: Our grief over him is as great as their (i.e. the enemy’s) joy for it, except that they have lost an enemy and we have lost a friend.

In the year 38 A.H., Mu`awiyah sent ‘Amr ibn al-As to Egypt with a large force. ‘Amr ibn al-As called upon Mu’awiyah ibn Hudayj for assistance. They brought together the supporters of Othman and waged a war against Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr (son of caliph Abu Bakr), capturing him. Mu’awiyah ibn Hudayj beheaded him. Stitching his body into the belly of a dead ass, he burnt his corpse... Muhammad was at that time twenty-eight years old. It is reported that when the news of this tragedy reached his mother, she fell onto a great rage and indignation. Aisha, his paternal sister, took a vow that, as long as she lived, she would never eat roasted meat. Since then, she used to curse Mu’awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, ‘Amr ibn al-As and Mu’awiyah ibn Hudayj after every prayer.

When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard the news of Muhammad’s martyrdom, he became immensely sad. He wrote in a very somber language to Ibn ‘Abbas who was in Basra about the tragic death of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr.

Hearing the news of Muhammad's martyrdom, Ibn Abbas came from Basra to Kufa to offer his condolences to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

One of the official informers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) came from Syria and said: "O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)! When the news of Muhammad's murder reached Mu'awiyah, he went to the pulpit and praised the group that took part in his martyrdom. The people of Syria rejoiced so much at hearing the news that I had never seen them in such an elated mood before." It was then that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) uttered the above saying. He further said that although Muhammad was his step-son, he was like his own son (at-Tabari, Vol. 1, pp. 3400-3414; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, pp. 352-359; Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, pp. 313-317; Abul-Fida', Vol. 1, p. 179; Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 6, pp. 82-100; Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 181-182; Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, pp. 1366-1367; Al-Isabah, Vol. 3, pp. 472-473; Al-Gharat, at-Thaqafi, Vol. 1, pp. 276-322; Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. 2, pp. 238-239).

We have written before (in the footnote to Sermon n.67) concerning the biography of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr.

336. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The age up to which Allah accepts any excuse for a human being is sixty years.

337. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One whose sin overpowers him is never victorious, and whoever secures victory by evil means is (in fact) vanquished.

338. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Allāh, the Glorified One, has fixed the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich. Consequently, whenever a destitute remains hungry, it is because some rich person has denied (him his share). Allah, the Sublime, will question them [the rich] about it.

339. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Not to be in need of putting forth an excuse is better than putting forth a true excuse.[276]

[276]The meaning here is that obligations should be carried out so that there is no occasion for putting forth excuses. After all, in making excuses, there is a hint for shortcomings and perhaps a sense of humiliation.

340. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The least right of Allah on you is that you should not make use of His favors in committing His sins.[277]

341. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: When the disabled fall short in performing acts of obedience to Allah, the Glorified One, it is a good opportunity given by Allah for the intelligent to perform such acts.

342. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The sovereign is the watchman of Allāh on earth.

343. Describing a believer, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A believer has a cheerful face, a sorrowful heart, a very broad chest (very generous), and a very humble heart. He hates high status and dislikes fame. His grief is long, his courage is far-reaching, his silence is much and, his time is occupied. He is grateful, enduring, buried in his thoughts, sparing in his friendship (with others), of a bright demeanor and of a soft temperament. He is stronger than stone but more humble than a slave.

344. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If a man happens to see the end of (his) life and his final fate, he will begin hating desires and their deception.

345. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There are two shares in the property of every person: heirs and accidents.

346. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The person who is approached with a request is free till he makes a promise.

347. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib (ع) said: Whoever prays but does not exert effort is like one who shoots without a bow-string.

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[277]There are a few grades of denial of favors and ingratitude. The first is that a person may not be able to appreciate (the real significance of) a favor. For example, the vision of the eyes, the speech of the tongue, the hearing of the ears and the movements of the limbs. These are all favors bestowed by Allah, but many people do not realize them to be favors and do not entertain feelings of gratitude, taking them for granted. The second grade is that a person may see a favor and appreciate it but may not feel grateful for it. The third grade is that a person may oppose the One Who bestows the favors. The fourth grade is that instead of using the favors granted by Him, a person may use them in committing sins against Allah. This is the highest grade of denial of favors, i.e. of ingratitude.

348. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Knowledge is of two kinds: that which is absorbed and that which is just heard. The one that is heard does not give benefit unless it is absorbed.

349. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Correctness of decisions goes together with power. One emerges with the other's emergence and disappears when the other disappears.[278]

350. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The beauty of destitution is chastity and the beauty of riches is gratitude.

351. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The day of justice will be more severe on the oppressor than the day of oppression on the oppressed.

352. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The biggest wealth is that one should not have an eye on what others possess.

353. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Utterances are preserved and actions are to be tired. "Every soul, for what it earned, is pawned" (Quran, 74: 38). People are to be made deficient (as regarding their bodies) and meddled with (as regarding their minds) except those whom Allah protects. The ones who inquires from among them aims at confusing, while the one who answers creates hardship. It is possible that the man who has the best views among them will be deviated from the soundness of his thinking by pleasure or displeasure, and it is possible that a single glance may affect even the man with the best wisdom from among them or a single expression may transform him.

354. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O folks! Fear Allah, for there is many a man who aspires for what he does not get, many a builder of a house who does not live to occupy it, and many a collector of that

[278]When anyone's star is auspicious and his luck is good, he steps automatically towards the goal in view, and his mind confronts no perplexity in determining the correct way of approach. But the person whose luck is about to ebb stumbles even in the light and his mental faculties become paralyzed. Consequently, when the downfall of the Barmakids began, ten persons from among them assembled for consultation about a matter but were not able to take a decision even after a long discussion. Seeing this, Yahya [the Barmaki] said, "By Allah! It is a forerunner of our decline and a sign of our downfall that even ten of us have not been able to settle a matter, although when we were in ascendancy, just one of us could easily solve ten problems."

which he shall just leave behind. Possibly he may have collected it wrongfully or by denying one's right. He acquired it unlawfully and had to bear the weight of sins on its account. Consequently, he returned (from this world) with that weight and came before Allah with sorrow and grief. "He lost this world and (also) the thereafter; that is a loss (which is) manifest" (Quran, 22: 11).

355. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Lack of access to sins is also a kind of chastity.

356. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The dignity of your face is solid, but begging dissolves it; therefore, look carefully before whom you dissolve it.

357. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: To praise more than what is due is sycophancy; to do it less is either because of inability to speak or of envy.

358. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) peace be upon one who keeps away even from minor sins and, hence, his burden is considered light.[279]

359. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who sees his own shortcomings abstains from looking into other's shortcomings. Whoever feels happy with the livelihood with which Allah provides him does not grieve over what he misses. Whoever draws out the sword of rebellion gets killed by it. Whoever strives without means perishes. Whoever enters the depths gets drowned. Whoever visits places of ill-repute receives blame.

Whoever speaks more commits more errors. Whoever commits more errors becomes shameless. Whoever is shameless will have less fear of Allāh. Anyone who decreases his fear of Allah causes his heart to die. One whose heart dies enters the Fire. Whoever observes the shortcomings of others and disapproves of them then accepts them for himself is definitely a fool. Contentment is a capital that does not dwindle. Whoever

[279]The result of lack of restraint and care with regard to small sins is that a man becomes rather careless in the matter of sins and, by and by, this habit produces boldness to commit larger sins. Then he begins to commit them without hesitation. Therefore, one should regard small sins as a harbinger of bigger sins and should avoid them so that the stage for committing big sins will not materialize.

remembers death much is satisfied with small favors in this world. Whoever knows that his speech is also a part of his action speaks less except where he has some purpose.

360. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The oppressor among the people has three signs: He oppresses his superior by disobeying him, and his junior by imposing his authority and he tops other oppressors.

361. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: At the extremity of hardship comes relief, and at the tightening of the chains of tribulation comes ease.

362. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to one of his companions: Do not devote much of your activity to your wife and children because if your wife and children are lovers of Allah, then He will not leave His lovers without caring for them. And if they are enemies of Allah, then why should you worry and keep yourself busy about the enemies of Allah?

363. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The greatest defect is when you are concerned about the defect (in others) which is already present in yourself.[280]

364. Someone congratulated another person in the presence of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on the birth of a son saying: "Congratulations for getting a rider of horses" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), said: Do not say so; but say: You have an occasion to be grateful to Allah, the Giver, and be blessed with what you have been given. May he attain full life, and may you be blessed with His devotion.

365. One of the officers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) built a stately house about which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: These are silver coins showing their faces. Certainly, this house speaks of your riches.

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[280]What a worse defect can there be that a man should criticize those defects in others which exist in himself? The requirement of justice is that before casting one's eye on the defects of others, one should look at his own defects and realize that a defect is a defect whether it is in others or in himself. A Persian couplet says: "Looking at other's defects is neither property nor manliness. Better look at your own self since you are full of defects."

366. It was said to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), peace be upon him: "If a man is left in his house and the door is closed, from where will his livelihood reach him?" He replied: "From whatever way his death reaches him."[281]

The meaning is that a man should be content in the matter of livelihood because whatever is destined for him will in any case reach him wherever he may be.

A Persian couplet says: "Livelihood, like death, will reach a man even if the door is closed, but greed keeps people (unnecessarily) anxious."

367. Offering condolences to people one of whom had just died, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: This thing has not started with you nor does it end with you. This fellow of yours was used to journeying and, therefore, it is better to think of him as still journeying. Either he will rejoin you or you will rejoin him.

368. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O people! Let Allah see you fearing at the time of happiness just as you fear Him at the time of distress. Certainly, whoever is given ease (of life) and does not consider it as a means of slow approach to tribulation (wrongly) considers himself as safe against what is to be feared while whoever is afflicted with straitened circumstances but does not perceive them to be a trial loses to a coveted reward.

369. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O slaves of desires! Cut them short because whoever leans on the world gets nothing out of it except the pain of hardships. O people! Take upon yourselves to train your own souls and turn away from the dictates of your natural inclinations.

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[281]If Allah considers it appropriate to keep a man living while he is confined to a closed house, then He is certainly powerful enough to provide the means of living to him. Just as a closed door cannot prevent death, in the same way, it cannot prevent the entry of livelihood because the Might of Allah, the Almighty, is equally capable of either.

370. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not regard an expression uttered by any person as evil if you can find it capable of bearing some good.

371. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If you have a need from Allah, the Glorified One, then begin by seeking Allah's blessing on His Messenger, may Allah bless him and his descendants, then ask your need, because Allah is too generous to accept one (seeking His blessing on His Messenger) of the two requests made to Him while denying the other.

372. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever is jealous of his esteem should keep from quarreling.

373. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: To make haste before the proper time or to delay after a proper opportunity, in either case there is folly.

374. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not ask about things which may not happen because you have enough to worry about with what already happens.

375. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Imagination is a clear mirror, and the taking of lessons (from things around you) provides warning and counsel. It is enough for improving yourself that you should avoid what you consider as bad in others.

376. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Knowledge is associated with action. Therefore, whoever knows should act [upon it] because knowledge calls for action. If there is a response, well and good; otherwise, it (i.e. knowledge) departs from him.

377. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O people! The wealth of this world is broken into sorts that may bring an epidemic; therefore, keep off this grazing land. Leaving it is a greater favor than peacefully staying in it, and its part which suffices for subsistence is more blissful than its riches. Destitution has been ordained for those who are rich here, while comfort has been designated for those who keep away from it. If a person is attracted by its dazzle, it blinds both his eyes. And if a person acquires eagerness towards it, it fills his heart with grief which keeps alternating in the black part of his heart, some grief worrying him and another giving him pain. This goes on till the suffocation of death overtakes him. He is

flung in the open while both the shrines of his heart are severed. It is easy for Allah to cause him to die and for his comrades to put him in the grave.

The believer sees the world with eyes that derive instruction and takes from it food enough for his barest needs. He hears in it with ears of hatred and enmity [towards this world]. If it is said (about someone) that he has become rich, it is also said that he has turned destitute. And if pleasure is felt on one's own living, grief is felt over his death. This is the status, although the day has not yet approached when they will be disheartened.

378. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Allāh, the Glorified One, has laid down rewards for obedience to Him and punishment for committing sins against Him in order to save men from His chastisement and to drive them towards Paradise.

379. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A time will come when nothing will remain of the Qur'ān except its writing and nothing of Islam except its name. The mosques in such days will be busy with regard to construction but desolate with regard to guidance. Those staying in them and those visiting them will be the worst of all people on earth. From them, mischief will spring up and, toward them, all wrong will turn. If anyone isolates himself from it (mischief), they will fling him back into it. And if anyone steps back from it, they will push him towards it. Says Allāh, the Glorified One, (in one hadith qudsi, i.e. the tradition in which Allāh Himself speaks): I swear by Myself that I shall send upon them an evil wherein the one who endures will be bewildered," and He will do so. We seek Allah's pardon against stumbling through neglect.

380. It is related that seldom did Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) ascend the pulpit without uttering the following statement before starting his sermon: O people! Fear Allah, for man has not been created for naught so that he may waste himself, nor has he been left without anyone caring for them so that he may commit foolish acts. This world, which appears to him to be beautiful cannot be the replacement for the next which appears in his eyes to be bad, nor is the vain person, who is successful in this world, is sure that he will prosper in the next even to a small extent.

381. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There is no distinction higher than Islam, no honor more honorable than fear of Allah, no asylum better than self-restraint, no intercessor more effective than repentance, no treasure more precious than contentment, and no wealth is a bigger

remover of destitution than satisfaction with mere subsistence. Whoever confines himself to what is just enough for maintenance achieves comfort and prepares his abode in ease. Desire is the key of grief and the conveyance of distress. Greed, vanity and jealousy are incentives to falling into sins and mischief-making, the collection of all bad habits.

382. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following to Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah al-Ansari: O Jabir! The mainstay of religion and the world are four persons: The scholar who acts upon his knowledge, the ignorant person who does not feel ashamed of learning, the generous person who is not niggardly in his favors, and the destitute who does not sell his next life for his worldly benefits. Consequently, when the scholar wastes his knowledge, the ignorant feels too ashamed to learn, and when the generous is niggardly with his favors, the destitute sells his next life for the worldly benefits.

O Jabir! If favors of Allah abound on a person, the people’s needs toward him also abound. Therefore, whoever fulfills for Allah all that is obligatory on him in this regard will preserve them (Allah’s favors) in continuance and perpetuity, while whoever does not fulfil those obligations will expose them to decay and destruction.

383. Ibn Jarir at-Tabari has, in his History (Vol. 2, p. 1086; also Ibn al-Athir in his History, Vol. 4, p. 478) related from ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abu Layla, al-faqih, who was one of those who had risen with (‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muhammad) Ibn al-Ash‘ath to fight al-Hajjaj (ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi), that he (Ibn Abu Layla) was exhorting people to carry out jihad by recalling the following: “On the occasion of the encounter with the people of Syria, I heard Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), may Allah exalt his rank among the righteous and may He reward him with the reward of martyrs and men of truth, saying: ‘O believers, whoever observes excesses being committed and people being called towards evil and disapproves it with his heart is safe and free from responsibility for it, and whoever disapproves of it with his tongue will be rewarded and he is in a higher status than the former, but whoever disapproves it with his sword in order that the word of Allah may remain superior and the word of the oppressors may remain inferior, catches hold of the path of guidance and stands on the right way, while his heart is lit with conviction.’”

384. Another saying in the same strain runs as follows: So..., among them (the Muslim community) there is one who disapproves evil with his hand, tongue and heart. This man has perfectly attained the

virtuous habits. And among them there is one who disapproves evil with his tongue and heart but not with his hand. This man has attained only two virtuous habits but lacks one. And among them there is the third who disapproves evil with his heart but not with his tongue and hand. This is the one who lacks the two better qualities out of the three and holds only one. Then, among them there is also one who does not disprove evil with his tongue, heart or hand. He is just a dead man among the living.

All the virtuous acts, including waging a war in the way of Allah, as compared to the persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil, are just like spitting in the deep ocean [i.e. of no consequence]. The acts of persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil do not bring death nearer, nor do they lessen the livelihood. And better than all this is to utter a just expression before a tyrannical ruler.

385. The following is related from Abu Juhayfah who said, "I heard Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) saying: The first fighting with which you will be overpowered is fighting with the hands. Thereafter, you will fight with your tongues then with your hearts. Consequently, whoever does not recognize virtue with his heart or does not disprove evil will be turned upside down. Thus, his upside will be turned downwards and his low side will be turned upwards.

386. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Certainly, right is weighty and wholesome while wrong is light and epidemic.

387. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not feel safe from the punishment of Allah even about the best man in the whole community because Allah, the Sublime, says: "But none feels secure from the plan of Allah save the people (who are the) losers" (Quran, 7: 99). Again, do not lose hope even for the worst man of the community because Allah, the Sublime One, says: "Verily, none despair from Allah's mercy save the disbelieving people" (Quran, 12: 87).

388. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Miserliness contains all other evil vices and is the rein with which one can be led to every evil.

389. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: O son of Adam! Livelihood is of two kinds: The livelihood which you seek and the livelihood which seeks you; if you do not reach it, it will reach you. Therefore, do not turn your one day's worry into a year's worry. Whatever you get every day should be enough for you for the day. If you

have a whole year of your life, even then Allah, the Sublime, will give you every next day what He has destined as your share. If you do not have a year in your life-span, then why should you worry for what is not for you? No seeker will reach your livelihood before you, nor will anyone overpower you in the matter of livelihood. Likewise, whatever has been destined as your share will not be delayed for you.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "This statement has already appeared elsewhere in this Chapter except that here it is clearer and more detailed. This is why we have repeated it according to the principle laid down in the beginning of the book."

390. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Many a man faces a day after which he finds no day, and many a man is in an enviable status in the earlier part of the night but is mourned by wailing women in its later part.

391. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Words are in your control till you have not uttered them. But when you have spoken them, you are under their control. Therefore, guard your tongue as you guard your gold and silver, for often one expression snatches away a blessing and invites a penalty.

392. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not say what you do not know; rather, do not say all that you know because Allah has laid down some obligations for all your limbs by means of which He will put forth arguments against you on the Day of Judgement.

393. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Fear lest Allah should see you committing His sins or misses you when it is time to obey Him and, as a result, you will become a loser. Therefore, when you are strong, be strong in obeying Allah, and when you are weak, be weak in committing sins against Allah.

394. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Leaning towards this world despite what you see of it is a folly, and lagging behind in doing good deeds when you are convinced of good reward for them is an obvious loss, while trusting in everyone before trying is a weakness.

395. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It is (the proof of the) humbleness of the world before Allah that He is disobeyed only herein and His favors cannot be achieved except by renouncing it.

396. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One who is in search of something will obtain it, at least some of it.

397. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: That good is no good after which there is the Fire, and that hardship is no hardship after which there is Paradise. Every bliss other than Paradise is minor, and every calamity other than the Fire is comfort.

398. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Beware that destitution is a calamity, but worse than destitution is ailment of the body, while worse than bodily ailment is the disease of the heart. Beware that plenty of wealth is a blessing, but better than plenty of wealth is the health of the body, while still better than the health of the body is the purity of the heart.

399. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "Anyone whose his action keeps him behind, his lineage cannot push him forward." In another version, it is expressed thus: "Whoever misses his own personal attainments cannot gain any benefit from his forefathers' attainments."

400. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The believer's time has three periods: The period when he is in communion with Allāh, the period when he manages for his livelihood, and the period when he is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant. It does not behoove a wise person to be away (from his house) save for three matters, namely: for the purposes of learning, or going for something for the next life, or for enjoying what is not prohibited.

401. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Abstain from the world so that Allāh may show you its real evils, and do not be neglectful because (in any case) you will not be neglected.

402. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Speak so that you may be known, since man is hidden under his tongue.

403. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Take of the favors of the world whatever comes to you and keep away from what keeps away from you. If you cannot do so, be moderate in your pursuits.

404. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Many an expression is more effective than an onslaught.

405. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Every small thing that is contented upon suffices.

406. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Let it be death but not humiliation. Let it be little but not through others. Whoever does not get while sitting will not get by standing either. The world has two days: one for you and the other against you. When the day is for you, do not feel proud, but when it is against you, endure it.

407. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The best scent is musk, its weight is light while its smell is sweet.

408. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Put off boasting, give up self-conceit and remember your grave.

409. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The child has a right on the father while the father, too, has a right on the child. The right of the father on the child is that the latter should obey the former in every matter save in committing sins against Allah, the Glorified One, while the right of the child on the father is that the latter should give the first a beautiful name, provide him with good training and teach him the Quran..

410. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Evil effect of sight is right, charm is right, sorcery is right, and fa'l (auguring good) is right, while tayrah (auguring evil)[282] is not right, and spreading of a disease from one to the other is not right. Scent gives pleasure, honey gives pleasure, riding gives pleasure and looking at greenery gives pleasure.

Auguring well is not objectionable. For example, when after the migration of the Prophet (from Mecca to Medina), Quraysh announced

[282]"Fa'l" means something from which one augurs well while "tayrah" means something from which one augurs evil. From the point of view of religious laws, auguring evil from anything has no basis and it is just the product of whims.

that whoever apprehended the Prophet would be given one hundred camels as a reward. Thereupon, Buraydah ibn al-Husayb al-Aslami set off in his search with seventy of his men. When they met at a halting place, the Prophet asked him who he was. He said he was Buraydah ibn al-Husayb al-Aslami. Buraydah said, "The Holy Prophet was not auguring evil. Instead, he used to augur good." On hearing this, the Prophet remarked: "Barada amruna wa saluha" (our affair will be cooled and sound). Then he asked him what tribe he came from. When he replied that he was from Aslam, the Prophet remarked: "Salimna!" (We are safe). Then he asked from which scion he was. When Buraydah replied that he was from Banu Sahm, the Prophet remarked: "Kharaja sahmuka" (your arrow has missed its aim). Buraydah was much impressed by this pleasing conversation and inquired from the Prophet who he was. The Prophet replied, "Muhammad ibn Abdullah". Hearing this, he spontaneously exclaimed, "I do stand witness that you are the Messenger of Allah!" Forsaking the prize announced by the Quraysh, he instead acquired the wealth of belief" (Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 1, pp. 185-186, Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 1, pp. 175-176).

411. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Nearness with people in their manners brings about safety from their evil.

412. Someone uttered an expression above his status. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: You have started flying soon after growing feathers and commenced grumbling before attaining youth.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: Here, "shakir" [in the original Arabic text] means the first feathers that grow on a bird before it is strong enough to fly. And "saqb" means the young camel who does not grumble unless it becomes mature.

413. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever hankers after contraries gets no means of success.

414. On being asked about the meaning of the expression: "la hawla wala quwwata illa billah" (there is no strength nor power except through Allah), Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: We are not masters of anything along with Allāh, and we are not masters of anything save what He makes us masters of. So, when He makes us masters of anything of

which He is a superior Lord over us, He also assigns some duties to us. And when He takes it away, He takes away those duties as well.[283]

415. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) heard ‘Ammar ibn Yasir (may Allah have mercy on him) conversing with al-Mughirah ibn Shu‘bah and said: Leave him alone, O ‘Ammār, for he has entered religion only to the extent of his deriving advantage of the world, and he has willfully involved himself in misgivings in order to adopt them as cover for his shortcomings.

416. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It is good for the rich to show humility before the poor to seek rewards from Allah, but better than that is the pride of the poor towards the rich with trust in Allah.

417. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Allah does not grant wisdom to a person except that some day He will save him from ruin with its help.

418. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever clashes with the truth will be knocked down by it.

419. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The heart is the book of the eye.

420. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Fear of Allah is the chief trait of the human character.

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[283]What Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) meant is that man does not enjoy regular mastery over anything. Rather, such mastery is assigned by Allah. So long as this mastery lasts, the obligations of the Shari`a also continue, whereas when the mastery is taken away, the obligations, too, are lifted off, since in such a case, the laying of obligations will mean placing the responsibility beyond capacity which cannot be permitted by any wise or prudent person. This is why Allah has placed the responsibility of performing various acts after having conferred the necessary energy in the limbs. It follows that this responsibility will remain only so long as the energy subsists and that on the disappearance of the energy, the responsibility for action will also disappear. For example, the obligation to pay *zakat* applies only when there is wealth, but when Allāh takes away the wealth, He removes the liability to pay *zakat* because in such a case, the laying of obligation is against prudence.

421. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do not try the sharpness of your tongue against the One Who gave you the power to speak, nor the eloquence of your speech against the One Who set you on the right path.

422. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It is enough for your own discipline that you abstain from what you dislike from others.

423. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: One should endure like free people; otherwise, one should keep quite like the ignorant.

In an incident, it is related that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays by way of offering his condolences on the death of his son: Either endure like great people or else you will forget like animals.

424. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It deceives, it harms and it passes away. Allah, the Sublime, did not approve it as a reward for His lovers nor as a punishment for His enemies. In fact, the people of this world are like those riders that as soon as they descended, the driver called out to them and they marched off.

425. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said to his son al-Hassan (ع): O my son! Do not leave anything of this world behind you because you will be leaving it for either of two sorts of persons: a person who uses it in obeying Allah, in this case he will acquire virtue through what was evil for you, or a person who uses it in disobeying Allah and, in that case, he will be reaping evil with what you collected for him. So, you will be assisting him in his sinfulness. Neither of these two deserves to be preferred by you over your own self.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "This saying is also related in another version thus: Whatever of this world is now with you was with others before you, and it will pass to some others after you. Thus, you are collecting things for either of two sorts of men: a man who uses whatever you collected in obedience of Allah and thus acquired virtues with what was evil for you, or a man who uses it in disobeying Allah, so you will be getting evil for what you collected. Neither of these two is such that you should prefer him over your own self, for you may burden yourself for his own sake. Therefore, hope for the mercy of Allāh: Divine livelihood for whoever survives anyone who passes away.

426. Someone said “Astaghfirullah!” (I seek Allah’s forgiveness) before Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: May your mother may lose you! Do you know what “istighfar” is? “Istighfar” is meant for people of a high status. It is a word that stands on six pillars: The first is to repent over the past, the second is to make a firm determination never to revert to it, the third is to carry out all the rights of people so that you may meet Allah quite clean with nothing to account for, the fourth is to fulfil every obligation which you ignored (in the past) so that you may now do justice with it, the fifth is to aim at the flesh grown as a result of unlawful earning, so that you may melt it by grief (of repentance) till the skin touches the bone and a new flesh grows between them, and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you (previously) made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. It is only on such an occasion that you may say: “Astaghfirullāh!”

427. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Clemency is (like) kinsfolk.

428. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: How wretched the son of Adam is! His death is hidden, his ailments are concealed, his actions are preserved, the bite of a mosquito pains him, choking cause his death and sweat gives him a bad smell.

429. It is related that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was sitting with his companions when a beautiful woman passed by and they began to look at her. It was then that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The eyes of these men are covetous, and such glances are the cause of their becoming covetous. Whenever anyone of you sees a woman who attracts him, he should meet his wife [for cohabitation] because she is a woman just like his wife.

One of the Kharijites said: “May Allah kill this heretic! How logical he is!” People then leapt towards him to kill him, but Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: “Wait a little bit. There should either be abuse [for an abuse] or else pardoning from the offence.”

430. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Suffices you if your wisdom distinguishes for you the ways of going astray from those of guidance.

431. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Do good and do not regard any part of it small because its small is big and its little is much. None of you should say that "Another person is more deserving than me" in doing good. Otherwise, by Allah, it will really be so. There are people of good and evil. When you leave either of the two, others will perform it.

432. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever mends his inward self, Allah mends his outward self. Whoever performs acts for the sake of his religion, Allah accomplishes his acts of this world. Anyone whose dealings between himself and Allah are good, Allah turns the dealings between him and other people good, too.

433. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Forbearance is a covering curtain, and wisdom is a sharp sword. Therefore, conceal the weaknesses in your conduct with forbearance and kill your desires with your wisdom.

434. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There are some creatures of Allāh whom Allah particularly chooses for His favors so that they may be of benefit to other people. Therefore, He keeps such favors in their hands so long as they give them out to others. But when they deny them to others, He takes away the favors from them and gives them to others.

435. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It does not behoove a man to have trust in two things: health and riches, because there is many a man whom you see healthy but he soon falls and many a man whom you see rich but soon turns destitute.

436. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever complains about a need to a believer, it is as though he has complained about it to Allah. But whoever complains about it to an unbeliever, it is as though he complained about Allah.

437. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said on the occasion of an 'Id: It is an 'Id for anyone whose fast is accepted by Allah and for whose prayers He is grateful, and (in fact) every day wherein no sin against Allah is committed is an 'Id.[284]

[284]If vision and conscience are alive, even the remembrance of a sin destroys one's peace of mind because tranquility and happiness are achieved only when the spirit is free from the burden of sin and one's robe is not polluted with disobedience. And this real happiness is not bound by time, but on whenever one desires, he can avoid sin and enjoy this happiness. Such happiness will be

438. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: On the Day of Judgement, the greatest regret will be felt by the man who earned wealth through sinful ways, although it is inherited by a person who spends it in obeying Allah, the Glorified One, and he will be awarded Paradise on that account while the first one will be dragged into the Fire on its account.

439. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The worst in bargaining and the most unsuccessful in striving is a man who exerts himself in seeking riches although fate does not help him in his aims and, consequently, he goes from this world in a sorrowful state while in the next world, too, he will face its ill consequences.[285]

440. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Livelihood is of two kinds: the seeker and the sought. Therefore, whoever hankers after this world, death traces him till it turns him out of it. But whoever hankers after the next world, worldly ease itself seeks him till he receives his livelihood from it.

441. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The lovers of Allah are those who look at the inward side of the world, while the other people look at its outward side. They occupy themselves with its most remote benefits while the other people occupy themselves with the immediate benefits. They kill those things which they feared will have killed them, and they leave here in this world what they think will leave them. They took the amassing of wealth by others as a small matter and regarded it like losing. They are enemies of those things which others love while they love things which others hate. Through them, the Quran has been learned, and they have been given knowledge through the Quran. With them, the Quran is staying while they stand by the Quran. They do not see any

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the real happiness, and the harbinger of an ‘Id. A Persian poet says: “Every night is the Grand Night provided you appreciate its value.”

[285]Despite efforts throughout life, a man does not always achieve all the successes of life. If on some occasions he succeeds, as a result of effort and seeking, on many others he has to face defeat and to give up his objectives, admitting defeat before fate. A little thinking can lead to the conclusion that when things of this world cannot be achieved despite one’s effort and pursuit, how can the success of the next world be achieved without striving and pursuing? A Persian couplet says: “You hankered after the world but did not attain the objective. O Allah! What will be the result when the good of the next world has not even been sought?”

objective of hope above what they hope and no objective of fear above what they fear.

442. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Remember that pleasures will pass away while the consequences will stay.

443. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Try (a man) and you will hate him!

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "Some people say that this saying was articulated by the Prophet (ص), but what confirms that it is the saying of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is the statement related by Tha'lab from Ibn al-Arabi, that is, that (caliph) al-Ma'mun said, "If Ali had not said 'ukhbur thiqlihi' (try a man and you will hate him)," I will have said: 'aqlihi takhbur' (hate a man in order to try him)."

444. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: It is not that Allah, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, may keep the door of gratitude open for a person and close the door of plenty upon him, or to open the door of prayer to a person and close the door of acceptance upon him, or to open the door of repentance on a person and close the door of forgiveness upon him.

445. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The most appropriate person for an honorable status is whoever descends from the people of honor.

446. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked: "Which of the two is better: justice or generosity?" Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) replied: "Justice puts things in their places while generosity takes them out from their directions. Justice is the general caretaker, while generosity is a particular benefit. Consequently, justice is superior and more distinguished of the two."

447. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: People are enemies of what they do not know.

448. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The whole of asceticism is confined between two expressions of the Quran: Allah, the Glorified One, says: "... lest you should distress yourselves because of what you miss and

be over-joyous for what He has granted you" (Quran, 57: 23). Whoever does not grieve over what he misses and does not revel over what comes to him acquires asceticism from both its sides.

449. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: What a breaker is sleep for the resolutions of the day!

450. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Governing power is the proving ground for people.

451. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: No town has a greater right on you than the other. The best town for you is that which bears you.

452. When the news of the death of (Malik) al-Ashtar (may Allah have mercy on him), reached Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), he said: Malik, what a man Malik was! By Allah! If he had been a mountain, he would have been a big one (a find), and if he had been a stone, he would have been quite stiff. No horseman could have reached it and no bird could have flown over it.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: "find" means a lonely mountain (rising in height above the others in the range).

453. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A little that lasts is better than much that brings grief.

454. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: If a man possesses a revealing quality, wait and see his other qualities.[286]

455. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) asked Ghalib ibn Sa'sa'ah, father of al-Farazdaq (the famous Arab poet), during a conversation between them: "What about the large number of your camels?!" The man replied: "They have been swept away by (the performing of) obligations,

[286]The good or bad quality that is found in a man springs from his natural temperament. If the temperament produces one quality, his other qualities will also be akin to this one because the dictates of temperament will be equally effective in either. Thus, if a man pays *zakat* and *khums,* it means that his temperament is not miserly. Therefore, it is expected that he will not be niggardly in spending in other items of charity as well. Similarly, if a man speaks a lie, it can be expected that he will indulge in backbiting, too, because these two habits are similar to each other.

O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)!" Whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "That is the most praiseworthy way of (losing) them."

456. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever trades without knowing the rules of religious law will be involved in usury.

457. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever regards small distresses as big, Allāh involves him in big ones.

458. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whoever maintains his own respect in view, his desires appear light to him.

459. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Whenever a man cuts a joke, he separates himself away a bit from his wit.

460. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Your turning away from the one who inclines towards you is a loss of your share of advantage, while your inclining towards one who turns away from you is self-humiliation.

461. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Riches and destitution will follow presentation before Allah.

462. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Al-Zubayr remained a man from our house till his wretched son 'Abdullah came forth.

Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (1/662-73/692), whose mother was Asma', sister of Aisha (daughter of Abu Bakr), had grown in his dislike of Banu Hashim especially towards Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) to such an extent that he was able to change the opinion of his father, az-Zubayr, against Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) although the latter was the son of his father's aunt. That is why Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "Az-Zubayr had always been from us, Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (our household), till his ill-owned son 'Abdullah grew up. (Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 906, Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 3, pp. 162-163, Ibn Asakir, Vol. 7, p. 363, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 2, p. 167, Vol. 4, p. 79, Vol. 20, p. 104).

Abdullah was one of the instigators of the battle of Jamal. His aunt, Aisha, his father, az-Zubayr, and the son of his mother's uncle, Talhah, all fought against Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following: “It was ‘Abdullah who urged az-Zubayr to fight (in the battle of Jamal), and made the march to Basra seem attractive to Aisha” (Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 4, p. 79).

Aisha loved her nephew Abdullah very much. To her, he was like the only child of a mother, and none in those days was more beloved to her than he was” (Al-Aghani, Abul-Faraj al-Isbahani, Vol. 9, p. 142, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 20, p. 120, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 8, p. 336).

Hisham ibn ‘Urwah relates the following: “I have not heard her (Aisha) praying for anyone as much as she used to pray for him (Abdullah). She gave ten thousand dirhams (as a gift) to the one who informed her of Abdullah’s safety from getting killed (by al-Ashtar in the fight of the Battle of Jamal), and prostrated to Allah in thanks-giving for his safety” (Ibn Asakir, Vol. 7, pp. 400, 402, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 20, p. 1117).

This was the reason for Abdullah’s authority over her and his complete command over her affairs. He was the one who directed and guided her in the direction which he wished.

However, Abdullah’s hatred towards Banu Hashim had reached such a stage that according to the narrations of a group of historians, “ During his (Abdullah’s) caliphate (in Mecca), he did not send blessings on the Holy Prophet in his Friday prayer sermon (khutba) for forty Fridays. He used to say: ‘Nothing prevents me from mentioning the Prophet’s name except that there are certain men (i.e. Banu Hashim) who become proud (when his name is mentioned).’” In another rendering, the text reads as follows: “Nothing prevents ... except that the Prophet has a bad household who will shake their heads on the mention of his name” (Maqatil at-Talibiyyin, p. 474, Muruj ath-Dhahab, Vol. 3, p. 79, At-Tarkh, al-Ya‘qubi, Vol. 2, p. 261, Al-‘Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, p. 413, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 4, p. 62, Vol. 19, pp. 91-92, Vol. 20, pp. 127-129).

Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said to Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas once: “I have been concealing my hatred towards you, the people of this house (i.e. the Household of the Prophet [ص]) for the last forty years...” (al-Mas‘udi, Vol. 3, p. 80, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 4, p. 62, Vol. 20, p. 148).

He also used to hate Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) in particular, defame his honor, abuse and curse him (al-Ya‘qubi, Vol. 2, pp. 261-262, al-Mas‘udi, Vol. 3, p. 80, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 4, pp. 61, 62-63, 79).

He gathered Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah (son of Imam Ali ibn Abu Tālib [ع]) and Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas with seventeen men from Banu Hashim, including al-Hassan ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib [al-Hassan II] and imprisoned them in the shi‘b (valley) of ‘Arim. He intended to burn them alive, so he placed plenty of wood at the entrance of the shi‘b. Meanwhile, al-Mukhtar ath-Thaqafi dispatched four thousand soldiers to Mecca. On their arrival, they attacked ‘Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr unexpectedly and rescued Banu Hashim. ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr made an excuse for his brother’s (Abdullah) deed saying that this action of his brother’s was a result of Banu Hashim’s refusal to swear the oath of allegiance to him (Abdullah), like the action of `Umar ibn al-Khattab towards Banu Hashim when they gathered in the house of Fatimah and refused to swear the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. So, Umar brought wood and intended to burn the house on them. (Maqatil at-Talibiyyin, p. 474, al-Mas‘udi, Vol. 3, pp. 76-77, al-Yaqubi, Vol. 2, p. 261, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 19, p. 91, Vol. 20, pp. 123-126, 146-148, Ibn ‘Asakir, Vol. 7, p. 408, al-‘Iqd al-farid, Vol. 4, p. 413, Ibn Sa‘d, Vol. 5, pp. 73-81, at-Tabari, Vol. 2, pp. 693-695, Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, pp. 249-254, Ibn Khaldūn, Vol. 3, pp. 26-28).

In this regard, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani writes the following: “Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr always instigated others against Banu Hashim and persuaded them (to adopt his viewpoint) by every worst method. He spoke against Banu Hashim from the pulpit, remonstrating against them. Once, Ibn ‘Abbas, or someone else from (Banu Hashim) raised an objection against him. But afterwards, he changed his way and imprisoned Ibn al-Hanafiyyah at the shi‘b ‘Arim. Then he gathered Ibn al-Hanafiyyah along with other members of Banu Hashim who were present (in Mecca) in a prison and collected wood to set fire to it. This was so because of the news that had reached him that Abu ‘Abdullah al-Jadali and other followers of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah had arrived (in Mecca) to support Ibn al-Hanafiyyah against fight ‘Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr. Therefore, he hastened to do away with the prisoners. But when this news reached Abu ‘Abdullah al-Jadali, the latter went when the fire was already set on them, putting the fire out and rescuing them (Al-Aghani, p. 15).

So, all these prove what Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said about him.

463. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: What has a man to do with vanity? His origin is semen, his end is a carcass, while he cannot feed himself nor ward off death?[287]

464. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked who the greatest poet was. He said: "Any group of them that did not proceed on the same lines in such a way that we can know the height of their glory, but if it has to be done, then it is 'al-Malik ad-Dillil'".[288]

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "Amir al-Mu'minin here is referring to Imri'ul-Qays.

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[287]If one ponders over his original condition, the eventual breaking up and ruining of his body, he will be compelled to admit his lowliness and humble status instead of being proud and vain. He will see that there was a time when he did not exist, then Allah originated his existence with a humble drop of semen which took the shape of a piece of flesh in the mother's womb and continued feeding and growing on thick blood. Upon completion of the body, he set foot on earth. He was then so helpless and incapable that he had neither control over his hunger and thirst nor on his sickness and health, nor could he do himself any benefit or harm. He had no authority over life and death, not knowing when the energy of limbs might be exhausted. He felt his senses might stop functioning, his eyesight might be taken away, his ability to hear might be snatched away. He could not tell when death might separate the spirit from the body and leave the latter to be cut into pieces by vultures and kites or for worms to eat in the grave. An Arabic couplet says: "How does one whose origin is semen and whose end is a carcass dare be vain?"

[288]This means that a comparison can be made among the poets when their imagination runs in the same field. But when the expression of one differs from that of another, and when the style of one varies from that of another, it is difficult to decide who is defeated and who has wins the prize. Consequently, from various considerations, one is preferred over the other, and someone is considered greater for one consideration, while the other wins the other consideration, as the famous saying goes: "The greatest poet of Arabia is Imri'ul-Qays when he rides, al-A'sha when he is eager for something, and an-Nabighah [the genius] when he is terrified." Nevertheless, despite this categorization, Imri'ul-Qays is held in high esteem among the poets of the first era because of the beauty of his imagery, the excellence of his description, his inimitable similes and rare metaphors, although many of his couplets are below moral standards and speak of obscene subjects. But in spite of this obscenity, the greatness of his art cannot be denied. An artist looks at a poetic production from the point of view of art, ignoring the other elements which do not affect art.

465. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Is there no free man who can leave this chewed morsel (of the world) to those who like it? Certainly, the only price for your souls is Paradise. Therefore, do not sell your soul except for Paradise.

466. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Two greedy persons never get satisfied: the seeker of knowledge and the seeker of this world.

467. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Belief means that you should prefer truth (even) when it harms you rather than falsehood (even) when it benefits you, that your words should not be more than your action and that you should fear Allāh when speaking about others.

468. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Destiny holds sway over (our) predetermination till effort itself brings about ruin.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "Something of this meaning has already appeared earlier though in words different from these."

469. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Forbearance and endurance are twins and they are the product of high courage.

470. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Backbiting is the tool of the helpless.

471. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Many a man gets into mischief because of being spoken well of.

472. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: This world has been created for other than itself and has not been created for itself.

473. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Banu Umayyah (the Umayyads) have a fixed period (mirwad) wherein they are having their way. But when differences arise among them, even if the hyena attacks them, it will overpower them.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "Here, mirward is a form derived from irwad which means: to allow time, to wait for, to give a respite. It is an extremely eloquent and wonderful expression. It is as though Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has likened the period of Banū Umayyah to a limited

area meant for the training of horses for racing where they are running towards the limit, so that when they reach its extremity, their organization is destroyed.[289] 474. Eulogizing the Ansar, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: By Allah, they nurtured Islam with their generous hands and eloquent tongues as a year-old calf is nurtured.

475. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The eye is the strap of the rear.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "This is a wonderful metaphor. It is as though Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has likened the rear part of the body to a bag and the eye to a strap. When the strap is let loose, the bag cannot retain anything. According to the well-known and reputed view, this is a saying of the Prophet, but some people have stated it belong to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Al-Mubarrad has mentioned it in his book Al-Muqtadab under a chapter titled "Words of single letters". We, too, have discussed this metaphor in our book titled Majazat al-Athar an-Nabawiyyah."

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[289]This is a prediction about the decline and fall of the Umayyads that proved true, word for word. This rule was founded by Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan and ended with Marwan ibn Muhammad al-Himar in 132 A.H. (749 A.D.) after a life of ninety years, eleven months and thirteen days. The Umayyad period was second to none in tyranny, oppression, cruelty and despotism. The despotic rulers of this period perpetrated such tyranny that it put blots on Islam, blackened the pages of history and injured the spirit of humanity. They allowed every kind of ruin and destruction only to retain their own authority. They led armies into Mecca, hurled fire on the Ka'ba, made Medina the victim of their brute passions and shed streams of Muslim blood. At last, this bloodshed and ruthlessness resulted in rebellions and conspiracies from all sides against the Umayyads. The latter's own their internal strife and agitation as well as mutual fighting paved the way for their ruin. Although political unrest had set in among them earlier, during the days of al-Walīd ibn Yazid, open disturbances began to take place. On the other hand, Banu al-Abbas (the 'Abbasids) also started preparations [to take over power from the Umayyads]. During the reign of Marwan al-Himar, they started a movement under the name of "al-Khilafah al-Ilahiyyah" (the Divine Caliphate). For successful piloting of this movement, they got a martial leader, namely Abu Muslim al-Khurasani who, in addition to his knowledge of political events and occurrences, was also an expert in the art of warfare. Making Khurasan his base, he spread a whole net against the Umayyads and succeeded in bringing the Abbasids to power. In the beginning, this man was quite unknown, and it is for this reason and for his humble status that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) likened him and his associates to the hyena as this simile is used for modest and humble people.

476. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said in one of his speeches: A ruler came to power over them. He remained upright and made them upright till the entire religion put its bosom on the ground.

477. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: A severe time will come to people wherein the rich will seize their possessions with their teeth (by way of miserliness) although they have not been commanded to do so. Allah, the Glorified One, says: "Do not forget generosity among yourselves" (Quran, 2: 237). During this time, the wicked will rise up while the virtuous will remain low. Purchases will be made from the helpless, although the Prophet (ص) has prohibited purchasing from the helpless.[290]

478. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Two types of persons will fall into ruin on my account: One who loves me and exaggerates, and the other who lays on me false and baseless blames.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, " This is on the lines of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) own saying which runs thus: 'Two categories of persons will be ruined on my account: One who loves me with exaggeration, and one who hates [me] and is a bearer of malice'." The Holy Prophet (ص) used often to urge and order the ummah to love Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), forbidding them from bearing any hatred against him. Moreover, the Holy Prophet (ص) used to regard the love for Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as the sign of Faith (iman) and hating him as the sign of hypocrisy (nifaq) (as we have already mentioned in a footnote above).

We would like to quote one of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ص) with regard to this subject. It has been narrated through fourteen companions that the Holy Prophet (ص) said, "Whoever loves Ali, he surely loves me, and whoever loves me, he surely loves Allah, and whoever loves Allah, He will permit him to enter Paradise. Whoever hates Ali, he surely hates me, and whoever hates me, he surely hates Allah, and whoever hates Allah, He will surely let him enter the Fire. And whoever harms Ali, he surely harms me, and whoever harms me, he

[290]Generally, purchases are made from helpless people in such a way that taking advantage of their need and necessity, things are purchased from them at cheap prices and are sold to them at high prices. No religion allows taking advantage of such helplessness and extreme need, nor is it ethically permissible to profiteer by taking advantage of others' helplessness.

surely harms Allah, (Surely, those who harm [the Cause of] Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in the present life and in the one to come and has prepared for them a humiliating chastisement [Quran, 33: 57]) (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 127-128, 130, Hilyat al-Awliya, Vol. 1, pp. 66-67, Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1101, Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 4, p. 383, Al-Isabah, Vol. 3, pp. 496-497, Majma‘ az-Zawa’id, Vol. 9, pp. 108-109, 129, 131, 132, 133, Kanz al-Ummal, Vol. 12, pp. 202, 218-19, Vol. 15, pp. 95-96, Vol. 17, p. 70, Ar-Riyad an-Nadirah, Vol. 2, pp. 166, 167, 209, 214, Al-Manaqib, Ibn al-Maghazili, pp. 103, 196, 382).

At the same time, the Holy Prophet used to caution the ummah against exaggerating with regard to love for Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) that exceeds the bounds of Islam. One who does so is called ghali (extremist), In other words, such a person is anyone who believes that the Holy Prophet (ص) or Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) or any of Shi‘ite Imam is a god, or attributes to them the special attributes of Allah, or believes that the twelve Imams are prophets, or makes any claim which they (the Holy Prophet and the Imams) did not make about themselves.

On the contrary, the Holy Prophet had also forbidden any offense or denigration concerning them (the Imāms). He used to blame those who lay false and baseless accusations against them as well as those who hated and harbored malice against them.

It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet (ص) sometimes used to refrain from mentioning some of the excellent qualities of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah al-Ansari narrates: “When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) approached the Holy Prophet with the news of the conquest over Khaybar by himself (by Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib [ع]), the Holy Prophet (ص) said to him: ‘O Ali! Had it not been for some groups of my ummah who may say about you what the Christians say about `Isa son of Maryam, I would have said (something) about you so that you will not pass before any Muslim but that he will seize the dust from the tracks of your feet to seek a blessing from it. But it suffices to say that you hold the same status in relation to me as Harun held in relation to Musa except that there shall, in all certainty, be no prophet after me’” (Majma` az-Zawa’id, Vol. 9, p. 131, Ibn Abul-Hadid, Vol. 5, p. 4, Vol. 9, p. 168, Vol. 18, p 282, Manaqib `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Ibn al-Maghazili, pp. 237-239, Manaqib Ali ibn Abu Talib, al-Khawarizmi, pp. 75-76, 96, 220, Kifayat at-Talib fi Manaqib `Ali ibn Abu Talib, al-Ganji, pp. 264-265, Arjah al-Matalib, pp. 448, 454, Yanabi`al-Mawaddah, pp. 63-64, 130-131).

The Holy Prophet (ص) had also informed the Muslim ummah that there will appear two types of deviated groups among the Muslims who will exceed the bounds of Islamic principles with regard to understanding Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as he himself has related: "The Messenger of Allāh (ص) called upon me and said: 'O Ali! There is a resemblance between you and `Isa son of Maryam whom the Jews hated so much that they laid a false accusation against his mother, and whom the Christians loved so much that they assigned to him the status which is not his'".

(Then, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) continues to say:) Beware! Two types of persons will fall into ruin on my account: One who loves (me) and praise me for what is not in me, and one who hates me and whose detesting me will lead him to any false and baseless accusation on me. Beware! I am not a prophet, and nothing has been revealed to me. But I act according to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet as much as I can (Al-Musnad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, p. 160, Al-Mustadrak, al-Hakim, Vol. 3, p. 123, Mishkat al-Masabih, Vol. 3, pp. 245-246, Majma' az-Zawa'id, Vol. 9, p. 133, Kanz al-`Ummal, Vol. 12, p. 219, Vol. 15, p. 110, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, p. 356).

The above mentioned sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as well have been reported from the Holy Prophet (ص) when he said to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): "O Ali! Two types of people will fall into ruin on your account: One who loves you with exaggeration, and the liar who lays false accusation on you" (Al-Isti`ab, vol.3, p. 1101).

Also, he said to him, "Two categories will be ruined on your account: One who loves with exaggeration, and one who hates you and who bears malice [against you]" (Ibn Abil-Hadid, Vol. 5, p. 6).

The famous scholar of tradition, Amir ibn Sharahil ash-Sha'bi (19/640-103/721), has confirmed this saying that these two categories appeared and both became disbelievers and were ruined (Al-Isti`ab, Vol. 3, p. 1130, Al-'Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 4, p. 312).

479. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was asked about the Unity of Allah (Tawhid) and His justice (Adl). He replied: Unity means that you do not subject Him to the limitations of your imagination, while justice

means that you do not lay any blame on Him.[291]His words, and He is the all-Hearing, the all-Knowing" (Quran, 6: 115).

480. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: There is no good in silence about matters involving wisdom just as there is no good in speaking with ignorance.

481. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said the following in his prayer for rain: "O Lord! Send us rain by submissive clouds, not by unruly ones."

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "This is an expression of wonderful eloquence, because Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has likened the cloud, which is accompanied by thunder, lightning, wind and flashes with unruly camels that throw away their saddles and throw down their riders, describing the clouds that are free from these terrible things to the submissive camels which are easy to milk and obedient to ride."

482. It was said to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع): "We wish you had changed your gray hair, O Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)!" He said: "Dye is a way of adornment, whereas we are in a state of grief."

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is referring to the death of the Messenger of Allah (ص).

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[291]The belief in the Unity of Allah is not complete unless it is supported by belief in Allah being free from all imperfections, that is, one should regard Him as being above the limitations of body, shape, place or time and should not subject Him to his own imagination and whims. This is so because the being who is contained by imagination and whims cannot be Allah, but a creation of the human mind can, while the field of mental activity remains confined to things which are seen and observed. Consequently, the greater man will try to appreciate Him through illustrations connected by the human mind or through his imaginative efforts, the more remote he will get from reality. In this regard, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (ع) says, "Whenever you contain Him in your imagination, he will not be Allah but a creation like your own self and is revertible to you." Justice means that whatever the form of injustice and inequity is, it should be dissociated from Allah, and He should not be given such attributes which are evil, useless and which the mind can in no way agree to attribute to Him. In this regard, Allah says, "And perfect is the word of your Lord in truth and justice: There is none who can change

483. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The fighter in the way of Allah who gets martyred will not get a greater reward than whoever remains chaste despite means. It is possible that a chaste person may become one of the angels.

484. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Contentment is a wealth that is not exhausted.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, "Some people have narrated saying that this is the statement of the Messenger of Allah (ص)."

485. When Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) put Ziyad ibn Abih in place of 'Abdullah ibn al-Abbas over Fars (in Persia) and its revenues, he had a long conversation with him in which he prohibited him from advance recovery of revenue. Therein he said: Act upon justice and stay away from violence and injustice because violence will lead them to forsake their abodes while injustice will prompt them to take up arms.

486. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The worst sin is that which the one who commits it takes it lightly.

487. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: Allah has not made it obligatory on the ignorant to learn till He has made it obligatory on the learned to teach.

488. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: The worst comrade is he for whom formality has to be observed.[292]

Sayyid ar-Radi says, " This is so because formality is inseparable from hardship, and it is an evil that is caused by a comrade for whom formality is observed. Consequently, he is the worst of all comrades."

489. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) said: "If a believer enrages (ihtashama) his brother, it means that he will leave him."

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[292]The friendship that is based on love and sincerity makes a man free from ceremonial formalities, but the friendship for which formalism is necessary is unstable. Such a friend is not a true friend. True friendship requires that a friend should not be a cause of trouble for his friend. If he is a cause of trouble, he will prove tedious and harmful and this harmfulness is a sign of his being the worst of all friends.

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “It is said that hashamahu or ahshamahu means: ‘He enraged him’. According to another view, it means ‘He humiliated him’, while ihtashamahu means ‘He sought these for him’, and that is most likely to cause him to separate.”

This is the end of our selection of the utterances of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). We praise Allah, the Glorified One, for having enabled us to collect the scattered utterances from various sides and to bring together from different places the material that was lying far away. We have no ability save through Allah. In Him we trust, and He is Sufficient for us. He is the best Supporter.

This book was completed in the month of Rajab, in the year 400 A.H. (1009 A.D.).

May Allah bless our master Muhammad, the last of the prophets and the one who guided us towards the best path, and bless his virtuous descendants and companions who are the stars of conviction.

A Line Reference to some Contents of Nahjul-Balagha

1. All Praise belongs to Allah Whose Glory lies beyond ...

(1) al-Harrani, Tuhaf al-Uqul an Al al-Rasul, 57;
(2) al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, I, 140;
(3) al-Qada al-Quda'i, Dustur, 153;
(4) al-Razi, Tafsrr, II, 164;
(5) Ibn Talhah, Matalib;
(6) al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' al-Abrar, I, bab al-sama' wa al-kawakib;
(7) al-Wasiti, 'Uyun, see al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol..77, 300, 423;
(8) al-Rawandi, Sharh, see Kashif al-Ghita', Madarik, 69;
(9) al-Tibrisi, al-'Ihtijaj, I, 150

2. I praise Him, seeking the completion of His bounty...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, I, 326;
(2) al-Tabari, al-Mustarshid, p. 73;
(3) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, al-'Iqd, III, 112;
(4) al-'Amidi, Ghurar, 331, 354;
(5) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I.

3. By Allah, so and so (Ibn Abi Quhafah)....

(1) Al-Mufid, Al-Jamal, 62;
(2) Ibn Qubbah, al-'Inqaf, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balagha, I, 69; see also 'Abd al-Zahra', I, 309-310;
(3) al-Saduq, Ma'ani, 344;
(4) al-Hassan ibn 'Abd Allah al-'Askari, from him al-Saduq in Ma'ani;
(5) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, al-'Iqd, IV, see 'Abd al-Zahra', I, 311-312 and al-Majlis, Bihar, Vol..8, 160;
(6) al-Ka'bi (d.319/931) - see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh, I, 69;
(7) Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Manaqib, see Bihar, Vol..8, 160; and 'Abd al-Zahra', I, 310-11;
(8) al-Mufid, al-Irshad, 135;
(9) al-Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughni, see al-Ghadir, VII, 83;
(10) al-Saduq, Ilal, bab al-illat allati min ajliha taraka Amir al-Mu'minrn (ع) mujahadat ahl al-khilaf;
(11) Abu Sa'id al-'Abi, Nathr al-durar and Nuzhat al-'adib, see Abd al-Zahra', I, 313;
(12) al-Murtada, Al-Shafi, 203, 204;
(13) al-Saffar, Al-'Inqaf from him al-Tusi in al-'Amali;

(14) al-Tusi, al-‘Amali, I, 392;
(15) Qutb al-Din Rawandi, Sharh, from Ibn Mardawayh and al-Tabrani;
(16) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkira, 133;
(17) al-Harrani, Tuhaf, 313;
(18) al-Murtada, Sharh al-Khutbat al-Shiqshiqiyyah, see A‘yan al-Shi‘ah, Vol.. 41, p. 195;
(19) al-Tibrisi, Al-‘Ihtijaj; I, 95; for a detailed discussion of sources, see ‘Abd al-Zahra’, I, 309-324.

4. Through us you were guided ...

(1) Al-Mufid, al-Irshad, 147;
(2) al-Tabari, al-Mustarshid, 95.

5. O people, tear the waves of ...

(1) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkira, bab 6, 137;
(2) al-Tibrisi, Al-Ihtijaj, I, 127;
(3) al-Bayhaqi, al-Mahasin, II, 139, see ‘Arshi.

6. By Allah, I shall not be like the badger that ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, events of the year 36 A.H., VI, 3107;
(2) Ibn Salam, Gharib Al-Hadrth, 174;
(3) al_Jawhari, Al-Sihah, V, 2026;
(4) al-Tusi, Al-Amali, 33.

7. They have taken Satan to be the sovereign ...

(1) Al_Zamakhshari, Rabi’, I, 109;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 50. (kh_t_l)

8. He claims that he swore allegiance ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 175, from (2)
(2) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal.

9. They thundered and ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 177, from (2)
(2) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal.
(3) Ibn A‘tham, Futuh, as quoted by (4)
(4) al_Khwarizmi in Al_Manaqib.

10. Lo, Satan has brought together ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al-Irshad, 118; see also under Sermon:22 and Sermon:134 below.

11. Mountains shift, yet you should not ...

(1) Al_Mamatiri, Nuzhat al_'abqar, see 'Abd al_Zahra', I, 340;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', IV, bab al_qatl wa al_shahadah.

12. Does your brother love us? ...

(1) Al_Barqi, Al-Mahasin, I, 262.

13. You are a woman's army ...

(1) Al_Dinawari, Al-Akhbar, 153;
(2) al-Mas'udi, Muruj, II, 377;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, I, 217;
(4) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-Iqd, IV, 328;
(5) al_Majlisi, Bihar, VIII, 447;
(6) 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, Tafsrr, 655;
(7) al-Tusi, Al-Amali, 78;
(8) al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 210, 203.

14. Your land is close to the sea ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 217;
(2) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal, see al_Mufid, op. cit.;
(3) al_Dinawari, Al-Akhbar, 151;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, I, 217;
(5) al_Mas'udi, Muruj, II, 368;
(6) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 169.

15. By Allah, even if I had found that ...

(1) Al_'Askari, Al-Awa'il, 102;
(2) al_Qadi al_Nu'man, Da'a'im, I, 396;
(3) al_Mas'udi, Ithbat,120.

16. My word is the guarantee of my promise ...

(1) Al_Jahiz, AlBayan, I, 170;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 132;
(3) al_Mufid, Al-Irshad, 139;

(4) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 236;
(5) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 162;
(6) al_‘Askari, Al-Awa’il, 102;
(7) al-Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 369 and Rawdat al_Kafi, 67;
(8) al_Tusi, Al-Amali, 147.

17. The most detestable of creatures ...

(1) al-Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 55;
(2) Abu Talib al_Makki, Qut, I, 290;
(3) al_Harawi, Al-Jam‘, see (4)
(4) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya;
(5) al_Qadi al_Nu‘mani, Usul al_Mathahib, 135;
(6) al_Tusi, Al-Amali, I, 240;
(7) al_Tabarsi, Al-Ihtijaj, I, 390;
(8) al_Mufid, al-Irshad, 109;
(9) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, I, 61;
(10) Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib Al-Hadith, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, I, 90.

18. When a case is put before ...

(1) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 141;
(2) al_Tabarsi, Al-Ihtijaj, I, 139;
(3) al_Qadi al_Nu’mani, Da‘a’im, I, 93;
(4) Narrated by Ibn Udhaynah from Imam al_Sadiq (ع) in al_Nuri, Mustadrak al_Wasa’il, III, 174; see also al_Saffar, Basa’ir al_Darajat.

19. What know ye what is against me ... ?

(1) Abul_Faraj, Al-Aghani,VIII, 59.

20. Indeed, if you could see ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 405.

21. Your ultimate goal is before you ...

(1) al_Sharif al_Radi, Haqa’iq, 87;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 157.

22. Lo! Satan has begun encouraging ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imama, I, 154;
(2) al_Thaqafi, Al-Gharat, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, II, 35;

(3) al_Tabari, Al-Mustarshid, 95;
(4) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(5) al_Tusi, Al-Amali, I, 172;
(6) al_Khwarizmi, Al-Manaqib; 117;
(7) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 171, II, 167;
(8) al-Mufid, Al-Jamal, 129; see Sermon:26 and Sermon:171 below.

23. Verily, the command descends ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, AlKafi, II, 56, 294, V, 56;
(2) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-‘Iqd, II, 366;
(3) Naqr ibn Muzahim, Siffin, 10;
(4) al_Ya‘qubi Tarikh, II, 149;
(5) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, bab al_kasb wa al_mal;
(6) al-Muttaqi, Kanz, VIII, 225;
(7) Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, in the biographical account of ‘A1i (ع);
(8) Ibn Salam, Gharib Al-Hadith, II, 183;
(9) Ibn al-Athir, Al-Nihaya, III, 468;
(10) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, I, 189;
(11) al-Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 80.

24. By my life, ...

(1) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, III, 244 (‘a.q.b).

25. It is only Kufa ...

(1) Al_Mas’udi, Muruj al-Thahab, III, 149;
(2) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, III, 337;
(3) Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, I, 305, X, 225;
(4) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 383;
(5) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 163;
(6) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat II, 636.

26. Verily, Allah sent Muhammad (ص) ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 154;
(2) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 303, II, 633;
(3) al_Tabaii, Al_Mustarshid, 95;
(4) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(5) al_Kulayni, Al_Rasa’il, mentioned by Ibn Tawus, op. cit.

27. Indeed, jihad is one of the doors of Paradise ...

(1) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, I, 170, II, 66;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 236;
(3) al_Dinawari, Al_Akhbar, 211;
(4) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, II, 474;
(5) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, I, 13;
(6) Abul_Faraj, Al_Aghani, XV, 45;
(7) Idem., Maqatil, 27;
(8) al_Saduq, Ma‘ani, 309;
(9) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 442;
(10) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 403;
(11) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 69;
(12) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 160-164;
(13) al_Kulayni, Furu‘ al_Kafi, IV, 5.

28. Surely, the world has turned its back ...

(1) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 138;
(2) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, I, 171;
(3) al-Baqillanī, I‘jaz, 222;
(4) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 35;
(5) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 365;
(6) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 235;
(7) al_Mas`udi, Muuj, II, 413;
(8) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, II, 633.

29. O people, who are together with their bodies, but ...

(1) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, I, 170;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 150;
(3) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 71;
(4) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 380;
(5) al_Qadi al_Nu‘mani, Da‘a’im, I, 391;
(6) Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, I, 306;
(7) al_Tusi, Al_Amali, I, 112;
(8) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, II, 483;
(9) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 158;
(10) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi.

30. If I had ordered it, ...

(1) Al_Balathiri, Ansab, V, 98, 101.

31. Don't meet Talhah ...

(1) Al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, II, 115;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, I, 115;
(3) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 314;
(4) al_Zubayr ibn Bakkar, Al_Muwaffaqiyyat, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 171;
(5) Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-'A'yan, biographical account of Ibn al_Mu'allim, see 'Abd al_Zahra', I, 412.

32. O people, we have been born in ...

(1) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 90;
(2) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, I, 175;
(3) al-Dhahabi, Mizan, II, 276;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, II, 237;
(5) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 173;
(6) al_Baqillani, I'jaz, I, 197.

33. Verily, Allah sent Muhammad (ص) ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 154.

34. Woe unto you! I am tired of rebuking you ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 51;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 150;
(3) al_Balathiri, Ansab, 380;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 79;
(5) Naqr ibn Muzahim, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 179.

35. Praise belongs to Allah, even though ...

(1) al_Balathiri, Ansab, 365;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 43;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 119, 141;
(4) Naqr, Siffin, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 110;
(5) Sibt, Tadhkira, 103;
(6) Abul_Faraj, Al_Aghani, IX, 5;
(7) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 412;
(8) Ibn al_Athir, Al_Kamil, II, 171;
(9) Ibn Kathir, Al_Bidaya, VII, 286.

36. I warn you ...

(1) Al_Zubayr ibn Bakkar, Al_Muwaffaqiyyat, 350;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 47;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 147;
(4) Sibt, Tadhkira, 100;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 97;
(6) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 402;
(7) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 371.

37. I took up the task ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Al_Amali, 134;
(2) al_Bayhaqi, Al_Mahasin, I, 37.

38. Doubt is called doubt because ...

(1) Al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 98;
(2) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 170;
(3) al-Jahiz, Rasa'il, 125.

39. I am faced with such who do not obey ...

(1) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 291, 297, II, 453-4;
(2) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 404;
(3) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 41, events of the year 39 H.

40. A true statement to which a false meaning ...

(1) Al_Shafi'i, Kitab al_Umm;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 41;
(3) Abu Talib al_Makki, Qut, I, 530;
(4) al_Ya'qubi, Tarikh, II, 136;
(5) al_Balathiri, Ansab, 352, 355, 361, 377;
(6) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, II, 131.

41. O people, loyalty and truthfulness are twins ...

(1) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 170;
(2) al_Jahiz, Rasa'il, 125.

42. O people, what I fear most for you ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, 3, 4;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 50;

(3) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 353;
(4) al_Kulayni, Furu‘ al_KafÙ III, 29;
(5) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 35, 47;
(6) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 138;
(7) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, 73, 145;
(8) Abu Nu‘aym, Hilyah, I, 56;
(9) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 436.

43. My preparations for war with the Syrians ...

(1) Al_Khwarizmi, Manaqib, 108;
(2) Naqr ibn Muzahim, Siffin, 55;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 94;
(4) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 108;
(5) al_Saduq, Man la Yahduruh al-Faqih, I, 461;
(6) al_Tusi, Misbah, 429.

44. May Allah disgrace Maqqalah, ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 65-77,
(2) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, 329-372;
(3) al_Balathiri, Ansab, 411-417;
(4) Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, Vol.. 55 in the account of Maqqalah ibn Hubayrah;
(5) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, III, 419;
(6) Abul_Faraj, Al_Aghani, IX, 100-106.

45. Praise belongs to Allah, Whose mercy ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Man la Yahduruh al-Faqih, I, 327;
(2) al_Tusi, Miqbah, 458; parts of it recorded by (3)
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad;
(4) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, I, 171;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 235;
(6) al_Harrani, Tuhaf;
(7) al-Baqillani, I‘jaz, 222.

46. My God, I seek Thy refuge ...

(1) A‘tham al_Kufi, Al_Futuh, II, 461;
(2) Naqr, Siffin, 132;
(3) al-Qadi al_Nu‘man, Da‘a’im, I, 347;
(4) narrated from the Prophet (ص) in al_Azhari’s Tahthib, III, 153;
(5) al_Nuri, Riyad al_qalihin, 197, hadith 975.

47. 0 Kufa! It is as if I see you ...

(1) Ibn al_Faqih, Kitab al_Buldan, 163;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, bab al_bilad wa al_diyar.

48. Praise belongs to Allah when night ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, 131, 132;
(2) mentioned by a group of biographers, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 287.

49. Praise belongs to Allah, Who knows the inside ...

(1) Al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun, see al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol..67, 304.

50. Verily, the source of misguidance lies in ...

(1) al_Barqi, Al_Mahasin, I, 208;
(2) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, bab al_bida‘ wa al_ra’y wa al_maqayis;
(3) Idem., Rawdat al_Kafi, 58;
(4) al-Ya’qubi, Tarikh, II, 136;
(5) al_Tawhidi, al_Baa’ir, 32.

51. They ask you to feed them ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, I, 329.

52. Lo, the world has ...

(1) al_Saduq, Man la Yahduruh al-Faqih, I, 329;
(2) al_Tusi, Al_Misbah, 461;
(3) Parts of it in Abu Nu‘aym, Al_Wilayah, I, 77;
(4) al_Mufid, al-‘Amsli, 87.

52. The best kind of sacrifice ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Man ls yahduruh..., I, 461;
(2) al_Tusi, Misbsh, 429;
(3) al_Khwsrizmi, Al_Mansqib, 108;
(4) Naqr, Siffin, 201;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, 94;
(6) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 108.

53. Rush towards me ...

(1) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV;

(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 128;
(3) Abu Mikhnaf, Al-Jamal, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 340;
(4) also the sources mentioned under Sermon:26.

54. As to your statement that ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, 209;
(2) 'Abd al_Zahra', Maqadir, II, 27, says that statements to this effect have been widely narrated from Imam 'Ali (ع).

55. In the company of the Prophet (ص)

(1) Naqr, Siffin, 520;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, IV, Rabi', bab al_qatl wa al_shahadah;
(3) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat;
(4) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal; for (3) and (4) see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 348-355.

56. Soon after me, a man ...

(1) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 373;
(2) al-Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi (1278) 207;
(3) al_'Ayyashi, Tafsir, under verse 16:106;
(4) al_Himyari, Qurb al_Isnad;
(5) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 119;
(6) al_Hakim, Al_Mustadrak, II, 385;
(7) al_Tusi, Al_'Amali, I, 214, II, 374;
(8) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 184.

57. The sand-storms struck you ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 48, 3378;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 124;
(3) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 100;
(4) al_Tabari, al-Mustarshid, 162;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya;
(6) al-Balathiri, Ansab, II, 369;
(7) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, II, 141.

58. The place they shall fall ...

(1) Al_Bayhaqi, Al_Mahasin, 385;
(2) al_Mas`udi, Murij, II, 416;
(3) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, II, 120.

59. Certainly not. By Allah, they are yet sperm ...

Sources same as that of Sermon 58.

60. Do not fight the Khawarij after me ...

(1) Al_Saduq, ‘Ilal, 201;
(2) al_Tusi, Al_Tahthib, II, 48.

61. There is a protective shield of Allah ...

(1) Ibn Kathir, Al_Bidaya, VIII, 12, from (2)
(2) Abu Dawud, Kitab al_Qadar;
(3) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 89;
(4) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, bab al-qatl wa al_shahadah.

62. Lo, this world is a place ...

(1) Al_’Amidi, Ghurar, under inna, 10, 88, 199.

63. Fear Allah, O servants of Allah! ...

(1) Al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 105, 154, 155, 246;
(2) Sibt, Tadhkira, 145.
(3) Naqr, Siffin, 7.

64. Praise belongs to Allah ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Al_Tawhid, 29, 62;
(2) al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun;
(3) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 238.

65. O Muslims! ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 479;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, I, 110, 133;
(3) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, II, 24;
(4) al_Bayhaqi, Al-Mahasin, 45;
(5) al_Tabari, Basharah, 172;
(6) al_Quda‘i, Dustur, 124;
(7) Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, XII, 182;
(8) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 380;
(9) Furat, Tafsir al_Quran.

66. Why didn't you argue ...?

(1) Al_Nuwayri, Nihaya, VIII, 168;
(2) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 326;
(3) al_Karajiki, Al_Ta'ajjub, 13;
(4) al_Jawhari, Al_Saqifah, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, II, at the beginning;
(5) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 263;
(6) Ibn 'Abd al_Birr, Al_Isti'ab, in the account of 'Awf ibn Athathah;
(7) al-Mas'udi, Muruj;
(8) al_Tawhidi, Al_Basa'ir, 59;
(9)al_Murtada, Al_'Amali, I, 198.

67. I had intended to make Hashim ...

(1) Al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 63 (events of the year 36);
(3) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 404.

68. How long shall I accord to you the consideration ...

(1) Al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 438, 458;
(2) al_Ya'qubi, Tarikh, II, 184;
(3) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat;
(4) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 3444, 3445, chronicles of the year 39.

69. I fell asleep as I sat ...

(1) Ibn Sa'd, Al_Tabaqat, III, 36;
(2) Abul_Faraj, Maqatil, 16;
(3) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 298;
(4) al_Qali, Dhayl al_'Amali, 190;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 160;
(6) Muhammad ibn Habib, al-Mughtalin, on the authority of Abu 'Abd al_Rahman al_Salami;
(7) Ibn 'Abd al_Birr, Al_Isti'ab, III, 61;
(8) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 9;
(9) al_Murtada, Ghurar, IV, 78;
(10) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 495.

70. O people of Iraq ...!

(1) Ibn Da'b, Al_'Ikhtilaq, 155;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 161;
(3) al-Tibrisi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 254;
(4) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, II, 236;

(5) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 301;
(6) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 105;
(7) Sibt, Tadhkira, 137.

71. My God, Allah, Who spreads ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib Al-Hadith, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, IV, 364;
(2) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 159;
(3) al_Qali, Dhayl al_‘Amali, 173;
(4) al_’Azhari, Tahthib;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya;
(6) al_Quda‘i, Dustur, 119;
(7) Sibt, Tadhkira, 136;
(8) al_Samahiji, Al_Sahifat al_‘Alawiyyah,
(9) al_Zamakhshari, Al_Fa’iq; for the isnad of this Khutbah see al-Mahmudi, Nahj al_Sa‘adah, 286.

72. Didn’t he give me his allegiance after ...

(1) Ibn Sa‘d, Al_Tabaqat, I, in the account of Marwan;
(2) al-Balathiri, Ansab, II, 361;
(3) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 37;
(4) Sibt, Tadhkira, 78;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 67; see al_Damiri, Hayat al_Hayawan and Ibn Abi al_Hadid, II, 54.

73. You know for certain that ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, chronicles of the year 23;
(2) al_’Azhari, Tahthib, I, 341;
(3) al_Harawi, Al_Jam‘;
(4) al_Shaykh Warram, Tanbih;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, events of the year 23.

74. Didn’t the knowledge of Banu Umayyah ...?

(1) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, under (q.r.f);
(2) al_Turayhi, Majma‘, under (q.r.f).

75. May Allah have mercy upon him who ...

(1) Al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 151;
(2) al_Karajiki, Kanz, 162;
(3) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 59;
(4) Ibn Shakir, ‘Uyun al_Hikam;

(5) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 231;
(6) al_Huqari, Zahr, I, 42;
(7) al_’Amidi, Ghurar;
(8) Sibt, Tadhkira, 145.

76. Banu Umayyah ...

(1) Abul_Faraj, Al_Aghani, XI, 29, II, 29;
(2) al_’Azhari, Tahthib, XV, 27;
(3) Ibn Salam, Gharib Al-Hadith;
(4) Ibn Durayd, Al_Mu’talif;
(5) Al_’Iqfahani, Al_Jam‘ bayn al_Gharibayn;
(6) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 186;
(7) al_‘Askari, Jamharat al_’Amthal, I, 165.

77. My God, forgive me ...

(1) Al_Jahiz, Al_Mi’at al_Mukhtarah.

78. Do you claim that ...?

(1) Ibrahim ibn al_Hassan, Siffin, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 203;
(2) al_Saduq, ‘Uyun Akhbar al_Rida, I, 138;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali, 249;
(4) al-Saduq, ‘Uyun al_Jawahir, see (5)
(5) Ibn Tawus, Faraj al_Mahmum, 57-59;
(6) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 368.

79. O people, women are ...

(1) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 85;
(2) Abu Talib al_Makki, Qut, I, 282;
(3) al_Kulayni, Furu‘ al_Kafi, V;
(4) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali, Majlis 50;
(5) al_Mufid, Al_Ikhtilaq.

80. O people, zuhd lies in ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Ma‘ani al_Akhbar, 251;
(2) Idem., Al_Khiqal, I, 11;
(3) al_Barqi, Al_Mahasin, 234;
(4) al_ ‘Amidi, Ghurar, 119;
(5) al_Fattal, Rawdah, 434;
(6) al_Tabarsi, Mishkat,106.

81. How should I describe this house ...

(1) Al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, I, 88;
(2) al_Qali, Al_‘Amali, II, 117;
(3) Ibn Durayd, Al_Mujtana, 31;
(4) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 138;
(5) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, III, 172;
(6) al_Murtada, Al_‘Amali, 153;
(7) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkira, 136;
(8) al_Tabarsi, Mishkat, 243;
(9) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 86;
(10) al_Karajiki, Kanz, 160.

82. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is high ...

(1) Al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 146;
(2) al_Quda‘i, Dustur, 59,
(3) al_’Amidi, Ghurar;
(4) al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun al_Hikam;
(5) Abu Nu‘aym, Hilyah, I, 77;
(6) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 132 (b.d.d), II, 287 (‘a.a.z).

83. How strange of the son of al-Nabighah ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, III, 10, I, 164;
(2) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 287;
(3) al_Tawhidi, Al_’Imta‘, III, 183;
(4) al_Bayhaqi, al-Mahasin, 54;
(5) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 145, 151;
(6) al_’Tusi, al-‘Amali, I, 131;
(7) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 117, III, 59, 110, IV, 59, 89;
(8) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, 513; al_Tusi narrates from Muhammad ibn ‘Imran al_Marzbani (d.384/994), Ibn ‘Uqdah (d.333/944) and al_Zubayr ibn Bakkar (d.255/869).

84. I bear witness that there is no Allah except Allah ...

(1) Abu Nu‘aym, Hilyah, I, 77;
(2) al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun al_hikam;
(3) Sibt, Tadhkira, 131;
(4) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 140.

85. He knows the secrets ...

(1) Al_Dinawari, Akhbar, 145;

(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 100, 101;
(3) al_Barqi, Al_Mahasin, 233-4;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 120;
(5) al_Tabarsi, Mishkat, 156;
(6) al_ ‘Amidi, Ghurar.

86. O servants of Allah, the most beloved of Allah’s ...

(1) Al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, bab al_‘izz wa al_sharaf; see also Ibn Abi al_Hadid, II, 132.

87. Allah didn’t crush any tyrant before ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 62;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 173;
(3) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 46.

88. He sent him after a period ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, ‘Usul al_Kafi, I, 60;
(2) al_Sayyid al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, I, 342;
(3) ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, Tafsir, p.3.

89. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is ...

(1) Al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun al_hikam;
(2) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 185;
(3) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 345.

90. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is not enriched by ...

(1) Mas‘adah ibn Sadaqah, author of Khutab Amir al_Mu’minin;
(2) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 406;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_Tawhid, 34;
(4) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, bab al_mala’ikah;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, discusses its unusual (gharib) phrases in several places;
(6) Ibn Tawus, Faraj al_Mahmum, 56.

91. Leave me and find someone else ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 3066 (events of the year 35);
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya (events of the year 35);
(3) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib al_Umam, I, 508.

92. I have pulled out the eyes of ...

(1) Al_Ya'qubi, Tar'ikh, II, 182;
(2) Abu Nu'aym, Hilyah, I, 68;
(3) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 6, 7, 16;
(4) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 377 (h.z.b), III, 200 ('a.dh.m);
(5) al_Hakim, Al_Mustadrak, II, 466;
(6) Ibn 'Abd al_Birr, Jami', I, 114;
(7) Ibn Hajar, Al_Isabah, II, 509;
(8) al-Tabari, Al_Riyad, 198;
(9) al_Suyuti, Tarikh al_Khulafa', 124;
(10) Dahlan, Al_Futuhat, II, 337;
(11) al_Qunduzi, Yanabi', 224.

93. Blessed is Allah, who is not attained by ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 134;
(2) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 74.

94. He sent him when the people ...

(1) Al_Majlisi, Bihar, XVIII, 219.

95. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is the First ...

(1) Al_Majlisi, Bihar, XVI, 380.

96. If He gives respite to the oppressor ...

(1) Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays, 110;
(2) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, II, 236;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, II, 301;
(4) Abu Nu'aym, Hilyah, I, 76;
(5) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 161;
(6) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 105;
(7) Sibt, Tadhkira, 137;
(8) Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh, biographical account of 'Ali (ع);
(9) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, II, 68;
(10) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 142;
(11) al-Tuqi, Al_'Amali, 62.

97. By Allah, they will continue ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 151;

(2) Sibt, Tadhkira, 100;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 157.

98. We praise Him ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Ma‘ani, 184;
(2) al_Saduq, Man la yahduruh..., I, 270;
(3) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, II, 50;
(4) al_Tabarsi, Mishkat, 107.

99. Praise be to Allah, who spreads ...

See ‘Abd al_Zahra’, II, 198-199.

100. Praise be to Allah, the First ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 48;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali;
(4) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 329;
(5) al_Karajiki, Ma‘dan, 226;
(6) al_Bayhaqi, Al_Mahasin, 41;
(7) al_Jahiz, Al_Hayawan, II, 90.

101. On that day Allah will gather ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 153;
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 131;
(3) al_Kulayni, Furu‘ al_Kafi, IV, 31;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 95;
(5) al-Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I ,197.

102. O people, look at the world ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 139;
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 143;
(3) al-Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, II, 225;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 352;
(5) al-Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 219;
(6) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 202;
(7) al_Qadi al_Quda‘i, Dustur, 48;
(8) al_Khuza‘i, Al_Fitan, see (9)
(9) Ibn Tawus, Al-Malahim, 27;
(10) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, V, 131.

103. Allah Almighty sent Muhammad ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 154;
(2) al_Nasa'i, Al_Haqa'iq, 70.

104. Until Allah sent Muhammad ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 160;
(2) 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al_Qummi, Tafsir, I, 384.

105. Praise belongs to Allah, Who laid down ...

(1) Al_Ghazali, Ihya';
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 126;
(3) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, II, 49;
(4) al_Qali, Al_'Amali, 171;
(5) Abu Talib al_Makki, Qut, I, 382, 407;
(6) Abu Nu'aym, Hilyah, I, 74, 75;
(7) al_Saduq, al-Khisal, I, 108;
(8) al_Qadi al_Quda'i, Dustur, 121;
(9) al_Tusi, Al_'Amali, 23.

106. I have seen ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 14, events of 37 H.;
(2) al_Kulayni, Furu' al_Kafi, V, 40;
(3) Naqr ibn Muzahim, Siffin, 256.

107. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is Manifest ...

(1) Al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 85, 209;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I, bab tabaddul al_'ahwal.

108. Everything humbles itself ...

(1) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 76;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I bab al_mala'ikah;
(3) al_'Amidi, Ghurar.

109. The best means by which ...

(1) Al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 104;
(2) al_Saduq, Man la yahduruh, I, 131;
(3) al_Saduq, 'Ilal, 114;
(4) al_Barqi, Al_Mahasin, 233;

(5) al_Tusi, al-‘Amali, I, 220.

110. I warn you ...

(1) Al_Marzbani, Al_Muniq, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, II, 242;
(2) al-Harrani, Tuhaf, 127;
(3) al_Qadi al_Quda‘i, Dustur, 51;
(4) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, 144;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 18, 25, 308;
(6) al_Jahiz, Al_Bayan, II, 112;
(7) Ibn Qutaybah,‘Uyun, II, 250.

111. Do you feel it when he enters ...

(1) Al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun al_hikam, see al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol..77, p. 430.

112. I warn you ...

(1) Al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, at the beginning;
(2) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 86, 189.

113. Praise belongs to Allah, Who ...

(1) Al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, II, 335;
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 156;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, II, at the beginning of each part;
(4) al_Qadi al-Quda‘i, Dustur, 33;
(5) al_’Amidi, Ghurar;
(6) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, II, 107.

114. My God, our hands have ...

(1) al_Saduq, Man la yahduruh, I, 335;
(2) al_Tusi, Misbah, adab qalat al_’istisqa’, see Kashif al_Ghita’, Madarik, 250;
(3) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, bab al_sahab wa al_matar;
(4) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, V, 53;
(5) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 338;
(6) al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 190,
(7) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal;
(8) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 139, 159;
(9) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib al_’umam, see Ta’sis al_Shi‘ah, 415;
(10) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I, 220.

115. He sent him as a caller unto ...

(1) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, VI, 249;
(2) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, III, 150;
(3) al_’Azhari, Tahthib, VII, 101;
(4) Ibn Faqih, Al_Buldan, 181;
(5) al_Harawi, al-Jam‘, see Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 41, V, 170;
(6) al_Muttaqi, Kanz, VI, 87;
(7) al_Daylami, Al_Irshad, I, 33.

116. You spent no wealth ...

See ‘Abd al_Zahra’, II, 260.

117. You are supporters of the truth ...

(1) al_Tabari, Tarikh;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 121;
(3) al_Waqidi, in Al-Jamal and;
(4) al_Mada’ini in his book, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh, II, 259.

118. What is wrong with you? ...

Ibn al-Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 215 .

119. By Allah, I have known ...

(1) Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays. 142;
(2) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 81, 82, 83.

120. This is the punishment ...

(1) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 165;
(2) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 100;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 139;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Ikhtilaq, 153, quoted from Ibn Da’b’s work;
(5) al_Tabarsi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 273;
(6) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 130;
(7) al_’Amidi, Ghurar;
(8) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, 135.

121. Were all of you with us ...

(1) Al_Tabarsi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 274;
(2) IbnQutaybah, Al_Ma‘arif, II, 136.

122. Whoever among you ...

(1) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 338;
(2) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, V, 53;
(3) al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 190, from al_Waqidi’s Al-Jamal;
(4) al-Mufid, Al_Irshad, 139, 159;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib al_’umam, see Ta’sis al_Shi‘ah, 415;
(6) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I, 220.

123. Place the armored in the vanguard...

(1) Naqr ibn Muzahim, Siffin, 235;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 9, events of 37 H.;
(3) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, V, 39;
(4) Ibn A‘tham al_Kufi, Al_Futuh, III, 73;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib, I, 583;
(6) Al_Tawhidi, Al_Basa’ir, 185;
(7) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 154.

124. We did not make persons arbiters ...

(1) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 37, events of 37 H.;
(2) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 100;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 157;
(4) al_Tabarsi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 275.

125. Do you ask me to seek ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 153;
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 131;
(3) al_Kulayni, Furu‘ al_Kafi, IV, 31;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 95;
(5) al-Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I, 197;
(6) al_Mada’ini, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 182;
(7) al_Thaqafi, Al-Gharat, I, 75.

126. If you refuse to stop claiming ...

(1) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 48, events of 37 H.;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya;
(3) al_Jahiz, Al_Hayawan, II, 90;
(4) al_Bayhaqi, al-Mahasin, 41;
(5) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali;
(6) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 329;
(7) al-Karajiki, Ma‘dan, 226.

127. O Ahnaf, ...

See the sources mentioned under Sermon:100.

128. O servants of Allah, ...

(1) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 320;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', bab tabaddul al_'ahwal.

129. O Abu Dharr, ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 206;
(2) al_Jawhari, Kitab al_Saqifah, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, II, 375;
(3) al_Ya'qubi, Tarikh, II, 120.

130. O those of differing minds ...

(1) Sibt, Tadhkira, 120;
(2) al_Qadi al_Nu'man, Da'a'im, 531;
(3) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, III,154, V, 270.

131. We praise Him for whatever ...

(1) Al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 282;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 210, V, 239.

132. The world and the Hereafter have ...

(1) Al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 77;
(2) See Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, II, 386.

133. Allah has taken upon Himself ...

(1) Ibn al_ Athir, Al-Nihaya, IV, 250;
(2) Abu 'Ubayd, Al_Amwal, 252.

134. O son of the accursed ...

(1) Ibn A'tham al_Kufi, Al_Futuh, II, 165.

135. Your allegiance ...

(1) Al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 142;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, III, 467.

136. By Allah, they did not ...

(1) Ibn ‘Abd al_Birr, Al_Isti’ab, II, 211;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Usd al-Ghabah, II, 61;
(3) al_Mufid in al_Irshad, 146, 142, and Al-Jamal, 143, from al_Waqidi;
(4) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, III, 318;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 154;
(6) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 310;
(7) al-Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 95;
(8) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(9) Safwah, Jamharah;
(10) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 3143.

137. He will make desires conform to ...

(1) Al_ ‘Amidi, Ghurar, 296.

138. No one overtook me ...

(1) al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 39, events of the year 23 A.H.;
(2) al_’Azhari, Tahthib, I, 241;
(3) al_Shaykh Warram, Tanbih;
(4) al_Harawi, Al_Jam‘;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya.

139. Verily, it befits those who are saved ...

(1) Al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 135, 359.

140. O people, one who knows his brother ...

(1) al-Quda‘i, Dustur, 139;
(2) Ibn Hudhayl, ‘Ayn, 215;
(3) al-Saduq, Al_Thiqal, 110;
(4) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, VI, 268.

141. One who lays goodness where it is not ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, 235;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 9;
(3) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, V,39;
(4) Ibn A‘tham, Al_Futuh, III, 73.

142. Lo, the earth which bears you ...!

(1) Al_Daylami, A‘lam, see al_Nuri, Mustadrak al_Wasa’il, I, 439;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 137 (b.t.n).

143. Allah sent His apostles ...

(1) Al_’Amidi, Ghurar, see ‘Abd al_Zahra’, II, 322.

144. O people, you are in this world ...

(1) Al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 73;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 139 as well as al_‘Amali;
(3) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I, 220;
(4) al_Qali, Al_‘Amali, II, 67.

145. Victory in this matter ...

(1) Al_Dinawari, Al_Akhbar, 134;
(2) Ibn A‘tham, Al_Futuh, II, 37;
(3) al_Tabari, Tarikh, IV, 237 events of 27 A.H.;
(4) al_Mufid, Al-Irshad, 120;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib, I, 419.

146. Allah sent Muhammad (ص) ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 386;
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 163.

147. Each of the two ...

(1) Abu Mikhnaf, Al-Jamal, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, I, 78;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 142.

148. O people, every man shall meet ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 229;
(2) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 436;
(3) al_Mas`udi, Ithbat, 103;
(4) Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, XII, 211.

149. They took to the right and to the left ...

(1) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 74.

150. I praise Allah and seek His help ...

(1) Sayyid al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, I, 334.

151. Praise is Allah's, Who proves ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 139;
(2) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 232, 235.

152. He has been allowed a respite ...

(1) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 108;
(2) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, V, 82;
(3) Warram, Al_Majmu'ah, 77.

153. The enlightened heart ...

(1) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 252, 324, 331;
(2) al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, I, 217.

154. Praise belongs to Allah, Whom epithets ...

(1) al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, I, 334.

155. Whoever can ...

(1) al_Tusi, Talkhiq al_Shafi, I, 326;
(2) al_Hilli, Mukhtaqar Basa'ir al_darajat, 195;
(3) al_Tabarsi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 326;
(4) al_Muttaqi, Kanz, VIII, 215;
(5) al_Majlisi, Bihar, bab al_fitan wa al_mihan, 448.

156. Praise belongs to Allah, Who has made ...

(1) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 510;
(2) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 97;
(3) al_Wasiti, 'Uyun al_hikam, see Bihar, Vol.. XVII, 113.

157. He sent him at a time ...

(1) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 46, III, 198, IV, 347, V, 34;
(2) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 62;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 173.

158. I was a goodly neighbor unto you ...

No sources mentioned.

159. His command is judicious and wise ...

(1) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', bab al_ya's wa al_qana'ah

160. He sent him with a brilliant light ...

(1) al_Majlisi, Bihar, XVIII, 222.

161. O brother of Banu Asad, ...

(1) al_Saduq, Al_'Amaii, 368;
(2) al_Saduq, 'Ilal, bab 119;
(3) al-Mufid, Al_Irshad, 172;
(4) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 64.

162. Praise belongs to Allah, the Creator ...

(1) Abu Nu'aym, Hilyah, I, 72;
(2) al_Wasiti, 'Uyun al_Hikam, see al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol..77, p.306;
(3) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I, bab al-mala'ikah.

163. The people are behind me ...

(1) al_Balathiri, Ansab, V, 60;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 96, events of 34 A.H.;
(3) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 308, II, 273;
(4) al-Mufid, Al-Jamal, 100;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib al_Umam (1909), I, 478.

164. He originated them ...

(1) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 27, II, 140, III, 238.

165. The young among you ...

(1) Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays, 89;
(2) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 62;
(3) al-Mufid, Al_Irshad, 373;
(4) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 46.

166. Allah Almighty sent down the Book ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 157, events of 35 A.H.;
(2) al_Radi, al-Khaqa'iq, 87.

167. O brothers, I am not ignorant of ...

(1) al-Tabari, Tarikh, V, 158, events of 35 A.H.;
(2) Ibn Miskawayh, Tajarib, I, 510.

168. Verily, Allah sent the Prophet ...

(1) al-Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 163.

169. Do you see, those who have sent you ...

(1) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal, in al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 156;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 192, events of 36 A.H.;
(3) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', bab al-jawabat al_muskitah wa rashaqat al_kalam.

170. O Allah, the Lord of the roof raised high ...

(1) Naqr ibn Muzahim, Siffin, 232;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 8, events of 37 A.H.;
(3) Ibn Tawus, in Muhaj from al_Hussain ibn Sa'id al-'Ahwazi, Kitab al_du'a' wa al_dhikr.

171. Praise belongs to Allah, from Whom one heaven ...

(1) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 48;
(2) al_Bayhaqi, Al_Mahasin, 41;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_'Amali;
(4) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya;
(5) al-Karajiki, Ma'dan, 226;
(6) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 329;
(7) al_Thaqafi, al-Gharat, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 295;
(8) al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 45, 76.

172. The trustee of His revelations, ...

(1) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 130;
(2) Abu Ja'far al_'Iskafi, Naqd al-'Uthmaniyyah, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, II, 171-173.

173. As for me, I am not intimidated by war ...

(1) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I, 172;
(2) al_Khwarazmi, Al_Manaqib, 117;
(3) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 171, 282, II, 167, V, 66, 240;
(4) al-Thaqafi, Al_Gharat;
(5) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 95;
(6) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(7) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 154.

174. O negligent people, ...

(1) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 191;
(2) See ‘Abd al_Zahra’, II, 422.

175. Draw benefit from Allah’s ...

(1) Al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 219;
(2) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, II, 443;
(3) al_Barqi, Al_Mahasin, 6;
(4) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali, 153;
(5) al-‘Ayyashi, Tafsir, II, 262;
(6) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 71.

176. You have all agreed to select ...

(1) Al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 48 (chronicle of the year 37) from Abu Mikhnaf.

177. An engagement does not ...

(1) al_Wasiti, ‘Uyun al_hikam, see al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol.. 77, 307;
(2) al_Saduq, Al_Thiqal, II, 163;
(3) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 162;
(4) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, III, 282.

178. Eyes perceive Him not, ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 98, 138;
(2) al_Saduq, Al_Tawhid, 96, 320, 324;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali, 205;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 131;
(5) al_Mufid, Al_Ikhtilaq, 236;
(6) Sibt, Tadhkira, 157.

179. I praise Allah for what He has ordained ...

(1) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 291;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 60, events of 38 A.H.;
(3) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 188.

180. Away with them ...

(1) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, I, 265;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh,VI, 65, events of 38 A.H.

181. Praise belongs to Allah, towards Whom ...

(1) al_Wasiti, 'Uyun al_Hikam, see al_Majlis, Vol.. 77, 310;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 145, 198.

182. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is known ...

(1) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I, 53;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, V, 299;
(3) al_Bahrani, Tafsir al_Burhan, I, 9, from a source other than Nahj.

183. Keep silent, may Allah disgrace you ...

(1) al_'Askari, Kitab al_Qina'atayn, 258.

184. Praise belongs to Allah Whom senses cannot perceive ...

(1) Abu Talib Yahya ibn al_Hussain ibn HarUn al_Hussaini, al-'Amali, 192;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', bab dawabb al_barr wa al_bahr;
(3) al_Tabarsi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 305.

185. He who attributes to Him states ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, I, 138;
(2) al_Saduq, Al_Tawhid, 96, 320, 324;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_'Amali, 205;
(4) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 131;
(5) al-Mufid, Al_Ikhtilaq, 236;
(6) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 157;
(7) al-Tibrisi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 299;
(8) al_Murtada, Al_'Amali, I, 103.

186. May my father and my mother ...

(1) al_Mada'ini, Siffin, see 'Abd al_Zahra', II, 478;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', bab al_mal wa al_kasb.

187. O people, I advise you to fear Allah ...

(1) Abu Manqur al_Tha'alibi, Al_I'jaz wa al_'Ijaz, 31.

188. One kind of faith is one which is fixed ...

(1) al_Tha'alibi, Al_I'jaz, 32;
(2) al_Saffar, Basa'ir, 31; on p. 202 from (3)
(3) Mas'adah ibn Sadaqah, Khutab Amir al_Mu'minin (ع);
(4) al-Saduq, 'Uyun, I, 164;
(5) al_Saduq, Al_Thiqal, II, 164;
(6) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 80, narrated by (7)
(7) al_Hakim, Al_Mustadrak, II, 466;
(8) Ibn 'Abd al_Birr, Jami', I, 114;
(9) Ibn Hajar, Al_Isabah, II, 509;
(10) al_Tabari, Al_Riyad, 198;
(11) al_Suyuti, Tarikh al_Khulafa', 124;
(12) Dahlan, Al_Futuhat, II, 337;
(13) al_Qunduzi, Yanabi' al_Mawaddah, 224.

189. I praise Him in gratitude for His ...

(1) Ibn Nubatah (d. 374/984) narrated this khutbah, see Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, III, 220;
(2) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 20, 108.

190. Praise belongs to Allah Who has ...

(1) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 87, 180, 245;
(2) Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, see 'Abd al_Zahra', III, 28.

191. Praise belongs to Allah Who has donned ...

(1) Ibn Tawus, Kitab al_Yaqin, 196;
(2) al_Kulayni, Furu' al_Kafi, IV, 168;
(3) al_Saduq, Al_Faqih, I, 152;
(4) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I, 113;
(5) al_Mawardi, A'lam, 97;
(6) See al_Tehrani, Al_Thari'ah, VII, 204.

192. Allah Almighty created the creatures ...

(1) Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays, 211;
(2) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali, 340;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 352;
(4) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 159;
(5) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 148;
(6) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I, 151;
(7) al_Karajiki, Kanz, 31;
(8) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 420. ‘Abd al_Zahra’ mentions 8 commentaries on this famous khutbah al_Qasi‘ah.

193. We praise Him for succouring ...

(1) al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, II, 308;
(2) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 54, 269.

194. Praise belongs to Allah, Who has made manifest ...

(1) al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol.. 74, 314.

195. He sent him (the Prophet) when there wasn’t ...

(1) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 87.

196. Those Companions of Muhammad (ص) ...

(1) al_Amidi, Ghurar, 243;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_‘Amali, see al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol. 17, 105.

197. He knows the cries of the beasts in the wilderness ...

(1) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 126;
(2) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, II, 49;
(3) al_Qali, Al_‘Amali, 171;
(4) Abu Talib al_Makki, Qut, I, 382;
(5) Abu Nu‘aym, Hilyah, I, 74, 75;
(6) al_Saduq, Al_Thiqal, I, 108.

198. Commit yourselves to prayer ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, V, kitab al-jihad, 36.

199. By Allah, Mu‘awiyah is not smarter than me ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, II, 336, 338.

200. O people, don’t be averse to ...

(1) al_Barqi, Al_Mahasin, 208;
(2) al_Nu‘mani, Al_Ghaybah, 9;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 300;
(4) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 76;
(5) al_Bahrani, Al_Burhan, IV, 260;
(6) al_Majlisi, Bihar, II, 266.

201. O Messenger of Allah ...

(1) Al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, I, 458;
(2) al_Tabari, Dala’il, 47;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 165;
(4) al_Tusi, Al_‘Amali, I, 108;
(5) al_’Irbili, Kashf, II, 147;
(6) Sibt, Tadhkira, 318.

202. O people, verily this world is a ...

(1) al_Saduq, Al_‘Amali, 132;
(2) al_Saduq, ‘Uyun akhbar al-Rida, I, 298;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 139;
(4) al_Tabarsi, Mishkat, 243;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyun, II, 253;
(6) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil;
(7) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 200;
(8) Warram, Majmu‘ah, 66;
(9) al_Qali, Al-‘Amali, I, 258;
(10) al_Bayhaqi, Al_Mahasin, II, 31; see ‘Arshi.

203. May Allah’s mercy be upon you, procure provision ...

(1) Al_Saduq, Al_Amali, majlis 75;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Majalis, 116;
(3) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 110;
(4) al_Tabarsi, Mishkat, 275.

204. Addressed to Talhah and al_Zubayr ...

(1) Abu Ja‘far al_’Iskafi, Naqd al_‘Uthmaniyyah; see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh, II, 173.

205. I dislike that you should be abusers ...

(1) Al_Dinawari, Al_Akhbar, 155;
(2) Naqr, Siffin, 103;
(3) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 154.

206. Hold back this young man ...
(1) al_Tabari, Tarikh, VI, 34, events of 37 H.; V, 196, events of 36 A.H.

207. O people, matters between you and me ...

(1) Naqr, Siffin, 484;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 118;
(3) al-Mas'udi, Muruj, II, 400.

208. What will you do with this spacious house ...

(1) Abu Talib al_Makki, Qut, I, 531;
(2) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, I, 329;
(3) al_Kulayni, Al_Kafi, I, 410;
(4) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', IV, bab al_lahw wa al_ladhdhat;
(5) al_Mufid, Al_Ikhtilaq, 152;
(6) Ibn al-Jawzi, Talbis Iblis, 194.

209. Verily, that which is in the people's hands ...

(1) Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays;
(2) al_Kulayni, Usul al_Kafi, II, 62;
(3) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 136;
(4) al_Saduq, Al_Thiqal, I, 333;
(5) al_Tawhidi, Al_Imta', III, 197;
(6) al_Nu'mani, Al_Ghaybah, 26;
(7) al_Tabari, al-Mustarshid, 30;
(8) Sibt ibn al_Jawzi, Tadhkira, 142;
(9) al_Tabarsi, Al_Ihtijaj, I, 293;
(10) al_Karajiki, Al_Intisar, 10;
(11) al_Shaykh al-Baha'i, Al_Arba'in, 98.

210. It was through the sway of His power ...

(1) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi', I, bab al_sama' wa al_kawakib;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 27 (a.z.r).

211. My God, whoever of Thy servants ...
No sources mentioned.

212. Praise belongs to Allah, Who is above ...
(1) al_Majlisi, Bihar, IV, 319.

213. I bear witness that He is First ...

(1) al_'Amidi, Ghurar;
(2) Ibn Abi al_Hadid, Sharh, III, 23.

214. Praise belongs to Allah, Who ...

(1) Sayyid Ibn al_Baqi, Al_Ikhtibar;
(2) al_Majlisi, Bihar, Vol. 94, 226.

215. Allah Almighty has given me a right ...
(1) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 352.

216. My God, I beseech Thee to avenge Quraysh ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Al_Rasa'il;
(2) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 154;
(4) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat;
(5) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 95;
(6) Safwah, Jamharah.

216. They marched upon my officials ...
Part of Sermon: 216 and sources same.

217. Abu Muhammad lies a stranger ...

(1) Abul_Faraj, Al_Aghani, XXI, 246;
(2) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, I, 126;
(3) al_Bayhaqi, Al_Mahasin, II, 53;
(4) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 279;
(5) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 192;
(6) al_Balathiri, Ansab, II, 261;
(7) al_Mas`udi, Muruj, II, 371.

218. He revived his intellect ...
(1) al_'Amidi, Ghurar, 233.

219. How far-fetched are his hopes ...

(1) al_Wasiti, 'Uyun al_hikam, see Bihar, Vol.. 77, 432;
(2) Ibn al-Athir, Al-Nihaya, II, 398;

(3) Abu Nu‘aym, Hilyah, II, 132.

220. Indeed, Allah Almighty has made His remembrance ...

(1) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 81.

221. The addressee is without any excuse ...

(1) al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, II, 272;
(2) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 232.

222. By Allah, if I were to spend a night on the thorns...

(1) al_Saduq, Al_Amali, 369;
(2) Sibt, Tadhkira, 155;
(3) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, bab al_khayr wa al_qalah;
(4) Ibn Shahr Ashub, Al-Manaqib, II, 109.

223. My God, save my face ...

(1) al_Rawandi, Al_Da‘awat, see Bihar, Vol.. 75, 297;
(2) al_Yamani, Al_Taraz, I, 119.

224. It is a house surrounded by tribulations ...

(1) Sibt, Tadhkira, 122;
(2) al_Khwarizmi, Al_Manaqib, 267;
(3) al_Muttaqi, Kanz al_‘Ummal, III, 511.

225. My God, Thou art the friendliest of the friendly ...

(1) al_Tusi, Misbah, 249;
(2) al_Samahiji, Al_Sahifat al_‘Alawiyyat al_’Ula .

226. So and so did good for Allah’s sake ...

(1) al_Rawandi, Al_Da‘awat;
(2) al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 47;
(3) see also the commentaries of Ibn Abi al_Hadid, III, 92 and Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani, IV, 97.

227. You drew my hand and I held it back ...

(1) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 142;
(2) al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 128;

(3) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal;
(4) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 310;
(5) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(6) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 154;
(7) al_Tabari, Tarikh, V, 28;
(8) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 165;
(9) al_Kulayni, Al_Rasa’il;
(10) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 95.

228. Verily, God_fearing is the key ...

(1) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, I, 355, II, 61, 103, III, 174;
(2) al-’Amidi, Ghurar, 112, 148, 213.

229. He discharged whatever he was commanded to do ...

(1) al_Mufid, Al-Jamal, 127;
(2) al_Mufid, Al_Irshad, 115; from (3)
(3) al_Waqidi, Al-Jamal,
(4) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, II, 227.

230. The property is neither mine nor yours ...

(1) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 69.

231. Beware that the tongue is a part ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 396;
(2) al_Raghib, Muhadarat, I, 89;
(3) al_Watwat, Al_Ghurar, 108;
(4) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, at the beginning;
(5) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 82, 132.

232. The difference between them ...

(1) al_Yamani, Al_Taraz;
(2) al_Zamakhshari, Rabi‘, I, 110.

233. My father and my mother ...

(1) al_Mufid, Al_‘Amali, 60;
(2) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, III, 143;
(3) Muhammad ibn Habib, Al_‘Amali, 112;
(4) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, hadith 228;
(5) Ibn Hisham, Al_Sirat al_Nabawiyyah, IV, 213;

(6) al_Balathiri, Ansab, I, 571;
(7) Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn al-Sari ibn Sahl al_Nahwi, Al_‘Amali;
For (3) & (4), see ‘Abd al_Zahra’, III, 182.

234. I began following ...

(1) Ibn al_Athir, Al-Nihaya, V.

235. Act while there is a respite ...

(1) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 54.

236. About the two arbitrators ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 154;
(2) al_Thaqafi, Al_Gharat, I, 312;
(3) al_Kulayni, Al_Rasa’il;
(4) al_Tabari, Al_Mustarshid, 95;
(5) Ibn Tawus, Kashf, 173;
(6) Safwah, Jamharah.

237. They are life for knowledge ...

(1) al_Kulayni, Rawdah, 386;
(2) al_Harrani, Tuhaf, 163.

238. O Ibn ‘Abbas ...

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, Al_Imama, I, 34;
(2) al_Mubarrad, Al_Kamil, I, 11;
(3) Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Al-`Iqd, IV, 309.

239. Allah requires you to be grateful ...

(1) al_’Amidi, Ghurar, 308.

Part Twelve

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[i]In the atmosphere that had been created soon after the Prophet (ص), Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (members of his family) had no course except to remain secluded resulting in the world’s continued ignorance of their real qualities and being acquainted with their teachings and attainments. To belittle them and keep them away from authority has been considered as the greatest service to Islam. If Othman’s open misdeeds had not given a chance to the Muslims to wake up and open their eyes there will have been no question of allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and

temporal authority will have retained the same course as it had so far followed. But all those who could be named for the purpose had no courage to come forward because of their own shortcomings while Mu`awiyah was sitting in his capital away from the center. In these circumstances there was none except Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who could be looked at. Consequently people's eyes hovered around him and the same common people who, following the direction of the wind, had been swearing allegiance to others jumped at him for swearing allegiance. Nevertheless, this allegiance was not on the count that they regarded his Caliphate as from Allah and him as an Imam (The Divine Leader) to obey as obligatory. It was rather under their own principles which were known as democratic or consultative. However, there was one group who was swearing allegiance to him as a religious obligation regarding his Caliphate as determined by Allah. otherwise, the majority regarded him a ruler like the other Caliphs and as regarding precedence, on the fourth status, or at the level of the common men after the three caliphs. Since the people, the army and the civil servants had been impressed by the beliefs and actions of the previous rulers and immersed in their ways whenever they found anything against their liking they fretted and frowned, evaded war and were ready to rise in disobedience and rebellion. Furthermore, just as among those who fought in *jihad* on the side of the Prophet (ص), there were some seekers of this world and others of the Hereafter. Now, in the same way, there was no dearth of worldly men who were, in appearance, with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) but actually they had connections with Mu`awiyah who has promised some of them positions and had extended to others temptation of wealth. To hold them as Shi`as of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and to blame Shi`ism for this reason is closing the eyes to facts because the beliefs of these people will be the same as of those who regarded Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) fourth in the series. Ibn Abul-Hadid throws light on the beliefs of these persons in clear words:

Whoever observes minutely the events during the period of Caliphate of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) will know that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had been brought to bay because those who knew his real status were very few. The swarming majority did not bear that belief about him which was obligatory to have. They gave precedence to the previous Caliphs over him and held that the criterion of precedence was Caliphate. In this matter, those coming later followed the predecessors and argued that if the predecessors had not the knowledge that the previous Caliphs had precedence over Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) they will not have preferred them to him. Rather, these people knew and took Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as a citizen and subject. Most of those who fought in his company did so on grounds of prestige or Arab partisanship, not on the ground of religion or belief, as we read on p. 72, Vol. 1 of *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*.

[ii]In the atmosphere that had been created soon after the Prophet (ص), Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (members of his family) had no course except to remain secluded resulting in the world's continued ignorance of their real qualities and being acquainted with

their teachings and attainments. To belittle them and keep them away from authority has been considered as the greatest service to Islam. If Othman's open misdeeds had not given a chance to the Muslims to wake up and open their eyes there will have been no question of allegiance to Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and temporal authority will have retained the same course as it had so far followed. But all those who could be named for the purpose had no courage to come forward because of their own shortcomings while Mu`awiyah was sitting in his capital away from the center. In these circumstances there was none except Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who could be looked at. Consequently people's eyes hovered around him and the same common people who, following the direction of the wind, had been swearing allegiance to others jumped at him for swearing allegiance. Nevertheless, this allegiance was not on the count that they regarded his Caliphate as from Allah and him as an Imam (The Divine Leader) to obey as obligatory. It was rather under their own principles which were known as democratic or consultative. However, there was one group who was swearing allegiance to him as a religious obligation regarding his Caliphate as determined by Allah. otherwise, the majority regarded him a ruler like the other Caliphs and as regarding precedence, on the fourth status, or at the level of the common men after the three caliphs. Since the people, the army and the civil servants had been impressed by the beliefs and actions of the previous rulers and immersed in their ways whenever they found anything against their liking they fretted and frowned, evaded war and were ready to rise in disobedience and rebellion. Furthermore, just as among those who fought in *Uuuad* on the side of the Prophet (ص), there were some seekers of this world and others of the Hereafter. Now, in the same way, there was no dearth of worldly men who were, in appearance, with Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) but actually they had connections with Mu`awiyah who has promised some of them positions and had extended to others temptation of wealth. To hold them as Shi`as of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and to blame Shi`ism for this reason is closing the eyes to facts because the beliefs of these people will be the same as of those who regarded Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) fourth in the series. Ibn Abul-Hadīd throws light on the beliefs of these persons in clear words:

Whoever observes minutely the events during the period of Caliphate of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) will know that Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) had been brought to bay because those who knew his real status were very few. The swarming majority did not bear that belief about him which was obligatory to have. They gave precedence to the previous Caliphs over him and held that the criterion of precedence was Caliphate. In this matter, those coming later followed the predecessors and argued that if the predecessors had not the knowledge that the previous Caliphs had precedence over Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) they will not have preferred them to him. Rather, these people knew and took Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) as a citizen and subject. Most of those who fought in his company did so on grounds of prestige or Arab partisanship, not on the ground of religion or belief, as we read on p. 72, Vol. 1 of *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*.

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